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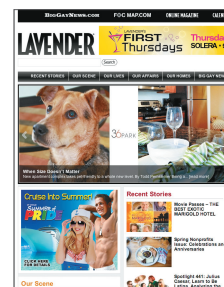
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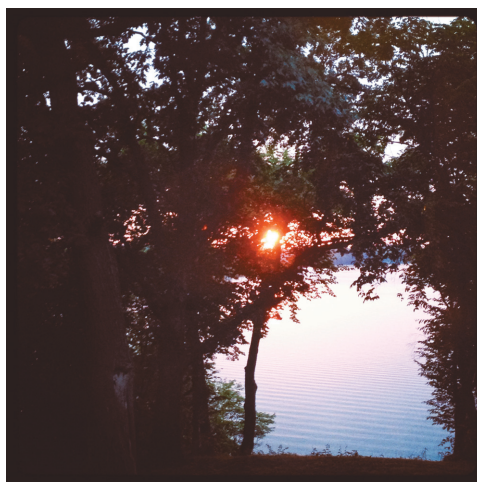
I love my hometowns. Only an hour away, I go home to Cokato and Dassel as frequently as my life in St. Paul (and elsewhere) allows. My parents are there, so many of my friends are in the area, my home church still welcomes me into its choir loft, and I still recognize so many people from my days of working at the grocery store. The good memories outweigh the bad and I choose to stay engaged with where I was raised. At this time in my life, I would not choose to live there, but prefer to visit. That little-bit-of-distance keeps it fresh for me, its halo effect is more glowing than not.

The universal role of a teenager is to buck the system and reject their surroundings, sometimes requiring a change in address. Some of us simply relocated, we can be called “expatriates” who now live outside of this small-town culture where we were raised. Every town has people who leave it; some leave on good terms, some leave in a huff or a blaze of glory. Many who leave on a negative note seek asylum in metropolitan areas. It happens everywhere for all sorts of reasons.

For the GLBT community and its allies, the closet is a pretty big reason to relocate from a small town—which has an arguably open and exposed way of life—to the anonymity of the city.

As mentioned in my piece “Coloring with David Bromstad,” he’s from Cokato, too. After I secured the materials for the article and knew it was a done deal, I made sure to mention it on my Facebook page. I knew it’d interest both my friends from home as well as the people who know me because of *Lavender*. I made sure to mention that it was a victory not just because David’s a successful designer in the home and garden issue, but because he’s a successful GLBT personality to come from Dassel-Cokato.

I know that posting about the marriage amendment, marriage equality, or other GLBT topics might lose me some of my conservative friends. I post things respectfully and it’s a risk I’m willing to take to keep up a consciousness-raising effort. But, as with each time I post something of that ilk, I was once again surprised by the reception. Thumbs and thumbs and thumbs. People liked it. And, liking something something like that is equivalent to outing yourself as someone who is tolerant of the GLBT community. It’s a little risky. They “liked” the fact that I got him in the magazine and that he’s yet another out and proud gay man from our hometowns. As with during the fight for marriage equality, I was bolstered by the people who



Sunset over Cokato Lake.

belong to those thumbs.

Then, one of my former speech coaches who holds a leadership position in the community commented: “Awesome! And there are a lot of GLBT community supporters out here also.”

His was the first comment, and it was one that took the lead and set the tone for anyone else who read that post. It gives me hope that the smaller towns out there have people in leadership who may not identify as being central to the GLBT community, but as supporters of it; as allies. That he’s around high schoolers who might be going through some of the same struggles David mentions in his interview *and* he is proud to out himself as a resource and a support is only better. He walks the talk.

And, as indicated by the thumbs, he’s not alone in supporting the GLBT community. This is heartening. When I asked David the question about how his coming out story might be different today in 2013, it’s certain that it would have been less difficult, but it’s by no means easy at any age in any era. Coming out isn’t just for the young.

Back home, there are the people who belong to the GLBT community who aren’t out, who aren’t activists, who don’t wear their sexuality on their sleeves. Perhaps they’ve never considered being part of a community that includes gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. It’s a constructed concept that may not have any relevance in Small Town, America. Looking at the archetypes, they might be bachelor farmers. They could be librarians. An aunt who never married. A priest who chose celibacy and a life with God. Everyone has a facet of life that involves sexuality; not everyone makes it a defining characteristic. Not all will choose to come out.

Without question, more will exit the closet as this new wave of marriage equality and its peripheral rights continues its way across the nation. With the shift in laws comes a shift in acceptance, a certain validation. Not all people will agree with these changes, but people are more bolstered than ever if they do. Coming out in 2013 will be a new beginning for these people, unlike any ever felt before by this community.

And, whether in small towns or big cities, there will always be the people who will support them...by thought, word, or deed.

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With thanks,

Andy □



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There And Back Again

Nearly a decade ago, in *Lavender's* July 2004 issue devoted to GLBT veterans, I interviewed transgender vets for the piece, "TransMission Impossible?" Like other gay and lesbian veterans, they spoke as civilians. Still in the throes of Don't Ask Don't Tell, no one on active duty could speak out without destroying his or her military career.

There is little record of transgender enlisted personnel, since all were in deep hiding, both from the military and their comrades, and found that despite their own difficulties, gays and lesbians were not always open to the concept of transgender.

But exist they did, as evidenced by TAVA (Transgendered American Veterans Association) formed in 2003. There were a scant 150 members then, but they ranging in age from 29 to 77 and had served in World War II, Korea, Vietnam and other theaters up to the present. At the time of the article, 50 transgender veterans joined in a March to the Wall—the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial, a historic event marking the first public acknowledgment of transgender American veterans.

It is difficult for non-trans people to comprehend transgender—

"gender dysphoria"—since it seems to be a direct repudiation of self. Not so to the affected individual, who knows that he or she has been born into the wrong gender, a problem that can be adjusted. Added to that is the fact that outward appearances give no easily recognizable clue to an individual's gender identification; not body type, ostensible masculinity/femininity, or profession, nor does gender have any direct correlation to one's sexual orientation.

A timely read, Kristin Beck's *Warrior Princess* (see Books, page 34) explores one individual's transgender journey. Six-foot, athletic, Chris Beck was popular, esteemed by his fellow U.S. Navy SEALs during a twenty-year career that earned him a Purple Heart and Bronze Cross. But Chris had known from childhood that he was not a boy. This very knowledge and certainty of the trans person profoundly confounds those who have never questioned their gender. This "otherness" can not only baffle, but enrage—witness the widespread transphobia and violence against trans people.

Knowledge and exposure to what is different will be the means to bring about acceptance. Kristin's story offers understanding and healing, both for her readers and herself. □

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The Imaginary Invalid. Photo by Ron Ravensborg

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A broad variety of international, national, and regional films, as well as performance art pieces, now run at the Gender Reel Festival. Its commitment to gender non-conformity is also very much in evidence. Joe Ippolito, Founder and Chair of the Gender Reel Fest, points out that "Minneapolis was the second city added to the festival bill after Philadelphia, the city where it started. I decided to bring Gender Reel to Minneapolis a year ago after moving here. Oakland and Portland were added a few months later." Various views of transgender experience are being celebrated as well as stimulating panel discussions. When you go you will also be part of a national experience as the festival is also being held in the other cities on the same weekend. This all points to an increasing national interest in and grass roots power of transgender people and their supporters.

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Moliere is the most widely produced classic French playwright on earth. In the 1600s he took on the monarchy, the Catholic Church, and in the case of *The Imaginary Invalid*, the accepted

medical practices of his time. Director Rick Shiomi says, "I feel like the nature of the play as personified in the Argan character (Edwin Strout) is Moliere's critique of medicine as humans either trying to do the impossible or cleverly and maliciously exploiting the human need for cures to ailments. The main medical activity in the play is around enemas and we have a lot of fun playing that up. At the time, with practices such as smoke enemas and bleedings, one could see how Moliere came to his opinions."

Though in some ways we've come a long way over the past three and a half centuries, Moliere's satire has resonance today. Pharmaceutical corporations profit enormously by dubious medical applications and medicines, often advertised on television, something essentially unheard of thirty years ago. So often, one medication is undermined by another medication. Then, ironi-

cally, that undermining requires yet another medication, etc. etc. etc. Children are turned into prescription drug addicts by parents and doctors. Hence, in many cases children's cognitive and physical development have been thwarted in the name of profit. Since the 1990s the increasingly savvy general public has come to see prescription drug addiction as just as much of a social ill as illegal drugs. A harsh commentary on what we've become and a pattern that Moliere seems to have detected centuries ago.

LOVE AND MARRIAGE: WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES

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www.illusiontheater.org

Art is often a precursor and a catalyst to social change. Illusion Theater has known this for decades and the revival of its multimedia/live actor production about same-sex marriage that played before the anti-marriage amendment was defeated in Minnesota last year surely points to how art can be part of a critical mass collective unconsciousness evolving toward real equality. Actor Randy Schmeling shares, "As with last year's production, it's an ensemble piece that comments on the ups and downs of all kinds of loving relationships with the ensemble fitting into various roles as needed. Last year our statement was 'everyone has a right to love.' This year, since Minnesota has given everyone the right to love and marriage, we're re-interviewing all of the video couples from last year to discuss what a difference a year can make. And what a difference! Almost all of the same sex couples we interviewed last year are now engaged!"



Love and Marriage: What a Difference a Year Makes. Photo by Lauren B. Photography



Mrs. Smith Live!. Photo by Dan Norman

2013's revival also has new songs and co-creators Michael Robins and Roberta Carlson have been exploring the next generation's view on love and marriage with high school students. Schmeling, who gave a terrific performance in Artisphere's trans-production *Welcome To Normal* a few years ago, adds "it's a whole new show for a whole new year."

MRS. SMITH LIVE!

Through Oct. 13
Camp Bar, 490 N. Robert St., St. Paul
(800) 838-3006
www.camp-bar.net

The first time David Hanbury performed Mrs. Smith was at a talent competition in Provincetown in 2001. He shares, "There was a \$500 prize and I was a broke young actor so I thought I would give it a try. There were a variety of acts at this show but it was mostly drag performers doing high-octane lip sync numbers. Since I was not a drag performer I knew I couldn't beat those queens at that game because it's just not what I do. So, while I walked to the show I asked myself how I could set myself apart from the other acts and decided that in contrast to being fabulous or fierce or doing a high energy number, I could play a depressed woman in crisis. The name Mrs. Smith popped into my head because it's such an average name, it's the opposite of 'fabulous.' I found myself in a *Dynasty*-esque sequined gown, a Liz Taylor-circa-1984 wig, put some blue eye shadow on and smeared mascara to make it look like I'd been crying. In the wings at the very last minute a friend helped me come up with the idea of missing cat named Carlyle." Since then, Hanbury has developed the role, along with input from Andrew Rasmussen, and the show has become a sensation.

PERILOUS NIGHT

Through Oct. 6
Nimbus Theatre, 1517 Central Av. N., Mpls.
(612) 548-1380
www.nimbustheatre.org

Director Liz Neerland says Lee Blessing's new play "is about power and how those who find themselves powerless to react to their situation. Despite the fact that the play is set in a mental hospital, it is not a play about mental illness. The realities created by Elizabeth (Shirley Venard) and Harriet (Dana Lee Thompson), the two patients, are ways for them to cope with trauma in their lives and the resulting loss of power. We discover that both women

have endured things that caused them to 'go crazy,' and the illusions that keep them institutionalized are the very things that allow them to retain control over their lives."

"In contrast, Samuel (Ross Destiche) and especially Carver (Kevin Carnahan), the two orderlies, are men who find themselves without control over the things they want. Both despise working around all these 'crazy people,' but for various reasons this job is the only option available to them. Therefore, they react to this powerlessness by exerting excessive control over those who are weaker than them – their patients."

WICKED: THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE WITCHES OF OZ

Through Oct 27
Orpheum Theatre
910 Hennepin Av., Mpls.
(800) 859-7469
www.hennepintheatretrust.org

The musical that captured the zeitgeist of the new millennium is now 10 years old and, frankly, as long as its tours are still up to snuff (and apparently they are), *Wicked* remains as great as, if not greater, than any stage musical or straight play of the past decade. And that includes *Doubt*, *August: Osage County*, and *The Goat*. Of course, it was robbed at the Tony Awards by the inferior *Avenue Q* and it can finally be said, it's light years superior to the regressively pubescent *The Book of Mormon*. And the boxoffice just keeps booming.

Wicked routes for green-skinned,

ostracized Elphaba, the Wicked Witch of the West, who generations of Oz fans have been conditioned to see as a villain. Galinda, the Good Witch, is sexy, elegant, white, blonde, and unctuously ingratiating when it comes to getting ahead academically and sociopolitically. The show, based on Gregory Maguire's novel, sees the Land of Oz, and especially its capitol, the Emerald City, as a paranoid totalitarian state, a concept not fully shaped in either L. Frank Baum's Oz book series or in the iconic 1939 film. That paranoia of a surveilled state, of course, resonated when the show opened when the Bush/Cheney Patriot Act horrified Americans who weren't brain dead and continues to resound in the Obama/Biden era when the President and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, both Democrats, have coolly stood by while more whistleblowers have been given the shaft than in the previous GOP era.

In a way, Elphaba is reminiscent of Manning or Snowden, two victims of Barack and Hillary's political animalism, as she defies the system as she sings one of the greatest showstoppers in all musical theater, *Defying Gravity*. Remember, the music is by Stephen



Wicked: The Untold Story of the Witches of Oz. Photo by Joan Marcus

Schwarz who gave us *Godspell* decades ago. Bear in mind, that that show was considered a sacreligious hippie fest by conservative Christians of its day. Schwarz also gave us the marvelous *Pippin* a few years later. To resurge decades later with *Wicked* is in itself a triumph of an older artist proving the notion that as you get older you actually get better and maybe even more courageous. □

"BEAR" WITH ME (WHILE I TELL YOU ABOUT) ... | Barry Leavitt

NEMAA'S 2013 FALL FINE ARTS SHOW

Solar Arts Building, 3rd Floor Gallery • 711 15th Ave NE, Minneapolis
September 20-22 & 27-29

Northeast Minneapolis Arts Association (NEMAA) proudly presents the 2013 Fall Fine Arts Show at the renovated Solar Arts Building, in the gallery/event space on the third floor. The Fall Fine Arts Show is an exhibit of more than 140 of our members' work. It's a great opportunity to view and purchase a vast collection of painting, photography, sculpture, mixed-media art, and much more — all in one location. The Fall Fine Arts Show is free and open to the public during weekend gallery hours. www.nemaa.org

29TH ANNUAL MINNESOBER PRESENTED BY GLBT IN RECOVERY

September 27 • 4-10pm & September 28 • 8am – 10pm
All God's Children Church • 3100 Park Ave., Minneapolis

This year Minnesober has expanded its models of recovery to include 12 step, health realization and holistic approach. There will be entertainment, banquet dinner, silent auction, guest speakers, workshops and a video memoriam paying tribute to those the community has lost over the years. The whole recovery community is welcome to take part in this amazing event. Scholarships are available to those unable to pay. Please visit our www.glbtinrecovery.com to learn more and register.

CLARE HOUSING'S 3RD ANNUAL A PLACE TO CALL HOME

October 2 • 7:30-8:30am

Nicollet Island Pavilion • 40 Power St., Minneapolis

Learn how affordable housing and supportive services improve the quality of life for low-income people living with HIV/AIDS in the Twin Cities, and hear personal stories on the impact a stable home provides. There is no cost to attend, and guests will be invited to make a contribution to support Clare Housing's mission. The event includes a continental breakfast and free parking. To RSVP or for more information, contact Debbie Wyman at 612-236-9528 or Debbie.wyman@clarehousing.org

EAU QUEER FILM FESTIVAL

October 2-6

Woodland Theater at University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire
77 Roosevelt Ave., Eau Claire, WI

This fall the Eau Queer Film Festival (EQFF) returns to the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire campus for its fourth year. Running from October 2-6 in the Woodland Theater in the Davies Center, this lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning (LGBTQ) film festival offers audiences a wide cinematic range—everything from feature length comedies and dramas to documentaries and short films. The purpose of EQFF is to embrace difference, promote equality and educate through the powerful medium of film. All films are free and open to the public. www.eauqueer.com.



NAGAAA 3rd Place Team, Twin Cities Frostbite. Photo by Peter Noss

TWIN CITIES FROSTBITE TAKES 3RD PLACE AT NAGAAA WORLD SERIES

Coming off the Twin Cities Goodtime Softball League's A division championship, the Twin Cities Frostbite took their bats to Washington, DC for the NAGAAA Softball World Series. The Frostbite bats were hot the entire tournament as they hit their way to the winners bracket finals and eventually, a 3rd place finish in the B division of the NAGAAA Softball World Series. In addition to the Frostbite, congratulations to the Insanity, Swingers, Taboo, Force, Steel, and Titans, who all earned the right to represent the TCGSL at the World Series. Next year's NAGAAA World Series is in Dallas. For information about playing in the TCGSL, go to www.tcgsl.org.

OTCFF VOLUNTEER & INTERN OPPORTUNITIES

Plans are already underway for the 2014 OUT Twin Cities Film Festival, Minnesota's GLBT and Queer International Film Festival, and here's your opportunity to be part of it. Organizers are seeking creative, responsible, and motivated volunteers and interns to help put together next year's festival. Committee areas include volunteer organizer, festival outreach, film content researchers, event set up and tear down, hospitality and travel coordinator, website developer and graphic designer, sponsorship opportunities, researching and applying for grants. Interested? Contact Chris Durant, Festival Director, at outtwincitiesfilmfestival@gmail.com. ■



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FIRST THURSDAY AT BURGER MOE'S

SEPTEMBER 5, 2013



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FIRST THURSDAY AT BURGER MOE'S SEPTEMBER 5, 2013



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ON THE RECORD | Ed Huyck

**FUTURE BIBLE HEROES** *Partygoing*

While it has a different name and lineup and approach, it's not hard to think you are listening to the Magnetic Fields whenever spinning something by the Future Bible Heroes. Stephin Merritt has such a distinct voice, both in sound and lyrical style, that whenever he takes a turn on the mic, you could swear you were listening

to his more famous group. *Partygoing* is more than a stopgap before the Fields make a return, as Merritt is joined by a pair of talented collaborators: Christopher Ewen and Claudia Gonson. After all, who else could have as much fun with a tune called "Keep Your Children in a Coma," or offering a fake David Bowie voice in the joyfully blasphemous "Drink Nothing but Champagne"?

**DESSA** *Parts of Speech*

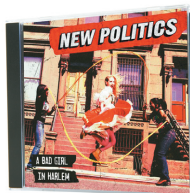
On her second proper album, the Twin-Cities poet, rapper, and singer emphasizes the last of those skills without losing touch with the first two. From beginning to end, *Parts of Speech* is a stunner, loaded with memorable tunes, compelling performances, and a fierce aesthetic that comes through in even the gentlest of songs. Shifting

between rapping and singing at will, Dessa unleashes a string of dizzying lyrics and images at every turn. Lead-off single "Warsaw" brings the manifesto that fuels the first half of the album. She can also pull off some amazing surprises, like an unexpected cover of Bruce Springsteen's "I'm Going Down" that strips away the bouncy rock beat of the original to lay the anger lyrics below it crystal clear.

**KANYE WEST** *Yeezus*

With an album title even more pretentious than Jay Z's latest, Mr. Kardashian has a lot to live up to this time around. Corrosive, hard-edged, and uncompromising, *Yeezus* is another difficult-if-immediately-engaging album from West, continuing his journey into the far edges of modern pop and hip-hop

for his inspiration. The dragging college dropout of the early days has been replaced by someone who will sing (with only a tinge irony) "I Am a God." As a bragging-rap tune, it's pretty hard to top ("I am the universe" maybe?). Then again, West has always been at his best when he's pushing every button in sight. In this case, a stripped-down approach (courtesy of Rick Rubin) focuses us to the message, rather than the tabloids.

**NEW POLITICS** *A Bad Girl in Harlem*

OK, this pop-rock trio may have moved from their native Denmark for the hipster paradise of Williamsburg, Brooklyn, but don't hold that against them. The cuts on their second full-length album are loaded with the vibes and joy of everyday living. This is life in the summer, 2013-style. Mixing bouncy beats, crunching rock guitar and a strong sense of

songcraft, the new politics bring the goods on the likes of first single "Harlem" or the feisty "Give Me Hope." Like the best power pop of the past (think Cheap Trick) they can even survive the occasional trip into mellow or ballad lines, though they probably could have left the 3:36 of "Overcome" by the wayside without damaging the whole fun of the experience. ■

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Flamethrower and barman Marco Zappia inside the Torpedo Room. Photo by Hubert Bonnet



WHERE TO DRINK RIGHT NOW

Ignore those over-achiever leaves, the ones that insist on being the first to turn color. Pay no mind to that crisp scent of fall flitting on the edge of that cool morning breeze. After being cheated out of spring, I refuse to call this fall. I'll dip into the autumnal wardrobe, perhaps, but that is it. I'm clutching the dragging coattails of this summer season and I'm not letting go until the first snow falls. My favorite way to toast any occasion, or season, is to pair it with the perfect cocktail. The Twin Cities have been experiencing a delicious boon of bar talent. Here's where to drink right now.

Eat Street Social's dining room was clearly designed with a bar in mind. The mixers here take center stage, flipping through their color wheel of citrus, bitters, herbs, and booze to create drinkable art, but that's not all. Nick Kosevich, president of the local North Star Bartender's Guild, propri-

etor of Bittercube Bitters, highly sought-after drink menu consultant, and part-owner of Eat Street Social has created a booze paradise outside, also known as a tiki bar. They're calling it the **Torpedo Room**.

Now forget what you brain conjures up when you're thinking tiki drinks – there will be no piña colada mix jugs behind this bar. Fresh ingredients will be combined with all matter of rums – a sorely underappreciated spirit. (Think outside the Bacardi.) All the ingredients are crafted from scratch, like their artisanal bitters, shrubs, and tinctures used at the inside bar. It's likely you've never had a Mai Thai anything like what these guys are making. The cocktails served here are crisp refreshers that transport any city-dwelling drinker to a tropical paradise.

Continued on page 22 ➔

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The only sangria you'll ever need to know from Borough. Photos by Hubert Bonnet

Another outdoor bar that must be experienced before the snow flies is the patio of **Borough**. Bar leader Jesse Held has amassed an impressive stable of talent at Borough, their downstairs bar, Parlour, and this sweet little side bar. They offer a selection of sangrias that are packed with citrus and herb flavors. No higher compliment could be paid to a pink wine than to be transformed into their green-cardamom-infused, honey-kissed rosé sangria. However, that is just the tip of the drink menu iceberg.

Settle into one of their high and comfortable seats and peruse the menu. There are familiar drinks, like their Old Fashioned: Old Grand Dad 114 and Jim Beam Rye is mixed with just a little Piloncillo (an unrefined sugar) for a husky sweetness that is balanced by splash of bitters. Or, if they are experiencing a rare slow day, ask the bartender what they feel like whipping up for you. The cavalcade of talent at this spot is sure to be a little heavy as they start hiring for the next phase in the Borough world. This same team will soon be heading to Uptown to open the still-under-construction **coup d'état**, their second restaurant.

While sipping at the bar you might notice plate after plate being delivered to all the other diners filled with a massive cheeseburger. You're going to want to order one of those as well. The thin patties and lush, gooey, ivory-colored cheese, stacks up to be the best stomach base for cocktails your taste buds could ever request.

NEWSY BITS



Did you catch that **coup d'état**? The new restaurant from the **Borough/Parlour** team will again have a kitchen run by Tyler Ship-ton and Nick O'Leary. They're moving into the base of a luxury apartment building that is taking shape on the ground where **Campiello** once stood (Lagoon and Girard.)

Remember what I told you about **The Triton** coming to the former **Joe's Garage**? Well, scratch that. It looks like the name and concept are under revision.

In Season is no more. After closing restaurant for an expected remodel, owner and chef Don Saunders made the tough decision to shutter it completely. You can still sample his elegant food at **The Kenwood**.

The Twin Cities finally has a real pop-up restaurant! Get a taste of what the **Travail** guys have been working on at the old **Louisiana Fried Chicken** space on West Broadway. They're calling it **Umami**, serving Asian-inspired dishes given a dose of their culinary wizardry. Check the **Travail** Facebook page for details.)

Continued on page 24 ➔

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(Clockwise from top) A seat at the bar at Saffron; A tiki takedown called 1999 and The Bird Has Flown with aquavit, honey, tonic and more; Master bartender Robert Jones. Photos by Hubert Bonnet

On the off-chance that perhaps there is a day that isn't ideal for sitting outside, there is one other spot so hot you'll stay toasty all year long. Just say the name with me, **Saffron**. Ah, doesn't that just feel like warmth and refinement? The man behind the bar is Rob Jones, the sort of drink shaker that has developed a beloved following. The liquorati would follow this fellow anywhere, but that he's residing at the Wadi brothers' delicious downtown spot makes the commute all the easier for any day of the week.

Jones has been recognized as the Best Bartender and recently won the Most Imaginative Bartender competition sponsored by Bombay Sapphire Gin and *GQ* magazine. (His winning cocktail was comprised of gin and watermelon that he cryovac-ed with fresh dill and an anise-

scented liqueur.) It's a global competition and he was flown out to Las Vegas to represent Minnesota. Even if he doesn't win the world with gin, he's won my admiration with his balanced and innovative cocktails like The Cornballer: Old Weller 107 bourbon is mixed with "roasted corn essence" and sea salt.

Or go for something summery with The Patio at Saffron 2.0, white sangria made with peaches, subtly sweet rum and a handful of fresh fruit. Paired with a couple of their heavenly small plates (even as simple as their freshly made potato chips with a yogurt and sumac-scented za'tar seasoning) you'll forget you're indoors.

No matter where you choose to cocktail, there are plenty of ways to savor all three of the seasons we've had this year. ▣






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The sumptuous, scrumptious brunch, served buffet-style, offers a delicious cornucopia: several varieties of eggs and potatoes, sausage, ham, bacon, biscuits and gravy, fruit, and pastries, plus cooked-to-order omelets. Add bottomless mimosas on special, and you're in dining/imbibing paradise.

If the great food weren't enough, the accompanying drag show is outstanding. Hosted by Brandonna Dupri LaReese, reigning Miss Gay Minnesota United States, it features a rotating cavalcade of ultra-talented female impersonators that includes many titleholders, such as Azalia Selena Cruz, who also doubles as server at the brunch. Entertainers appear both onstage and on the floor throughout the dining area, creating an up-close-and-personal, intimate ambience. DJ Rich ably presides over the music. The event nicely complements the renowned La Femme Show Lounge performances Wednesday-Sunday evenings upstairs at the bar.



Eggs 'n' Drag cast on September 8: (from left) Mercedes Iman, Azalia Selena Cruz, Brandonna Dupri LaReese, Anastasia Chapelle, Lucy Furr. Photo by George Holdgrafer

One of the most noticeable aspects is the incredible diversity of the appreciative audience. It ranges from children to seniors (like me). Gay 90's Manager Karen Hartigan, who's in charge of coordinating the well-planned crowd-pleaser, says, "We wanted to create something interactive that would appeal to everyone of all ages and genders. We truly welcome families of every type. It's all worthwhile when we see young kids joining in all the fun!"

What more could you ask for? All for only \$10, including the buffet and show. Reservations are strongly recommended. Watch *Lavender* for some upcoming exciting updates about Eggs 'n' Drag! ■

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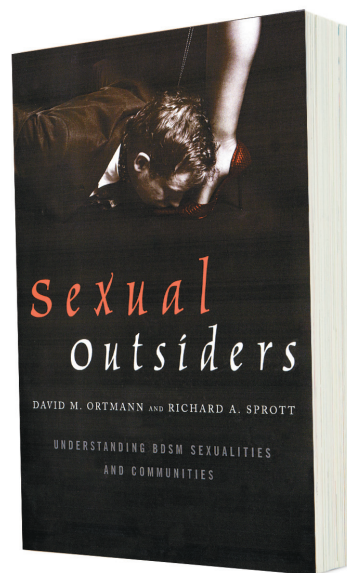
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LEATHER LITERATURE REVIEW – *Sexual Outsiders* by David Ortmann and Richard Sprott



When your humble columnist was getting into leather (many, many years ago), the go-to book for newly minted gay leathermen was Larry Townsend's *The Leatherman's Handbook*. This book was, to say the least, enlightening. But I would not have wanted to show it to my therapist at the time, to say nothing of my parents or other family members.

My, how times have changed. *Sexual Outsiders: Understanding BDSM Sexualities and Communities* is a great new resource suitable for multiple audiences including those curious about or newly into leather, BDSM, fetish, and kink—and, perhaps, their therapists and loved ones as well. For all these readers, authors David M. Ortmann and Richard A. Sprott have written a book that is a modern, reasoned, evenhanded introduction to the alternative sexual worlds of leather, BDSM, fetish, and kink.

Ortmann and Sprott have a wealth of expertise to share. Ortmann is a psychotherapist and sex therapist in private practice, and much of the book consists of fascinating personal stories of some of his patients. In many instances, these stories are presented in the patient's own words.

Sprott is a research psychologist and the executive director of the Community-Academic Consortium for Research on Alternative Sexualities (CARAS), an organization dedicated to furthering scientific investigation and scholarly analysis of understudied sexualities. And, indeed, the book makes the

very clear point that leather, BDSM, fetish, and kink are woefully understudied, and that the many gaps in society's understanding of these alternative sexualities have many negative consequences.

The authors use the personal stories in the book to illustrate the tremendous variety of people who make up the leather/BDSM/fetish/kink community, as well as to show how that community works. A large part of Ortmann's and Sprott's message is that this community has, in fact, developed around these alternative sexualities. This community is large, widespread, and sophisticated—and a tremendously valuable resource for its members. Several times throughout the book, the authors stress the undesirability of trying to do BDSM in isolation and the desirability of participating in this community as a way of enhancing one's kink journey.

Sexual Outsiders is written to appeal to several different audiences:

- The book could serve as a good basic introduction to leather, BDSM, fetish, and kink for people new to, or curious about, these alternative sexualities.
- It could serve the same purpose for therapists and other health professionals responsible for the care and treatment of kinky people.
- Readers who do not identify as kinky, but who have a family member or friend who does, will find answers to many of the questions they may have.
- Finally, longtime members of the leather/

BDSM/fetish/kink community will enjoy reading the personal stories of the people profiled in the book, and will find the authors' commentary throughout the book thought-provoking.

(Here's a private tip for longtime community members: As you read this book, try to put yourself in the position of someone new to the community, or even outside the community. Your empathy, as well as your appreciation for what the authors have created, will increase greatly.)

Because the book is addressed to so many different audiences, however, some readers might encounter challenges. Although the authors' writing style is generally approachable, readers who are not therapists or mental-health professionals may be put off by instances of therapist-speak sprinkled throughout the text. Similarly, readers not acquainted with the basics of Freudian, or especially Jungian, psychology may occasionally feel out of their depth.

But these are, in the end, minor quibbles. In *Sexual Outsiders* Ortmann and Sprott have created a worthwhile addition to the leather/BDSM/fetish/kink community's canon of literature about itself, as well as a useful contribution to the scholarly and academic literature about alternative sexualities.

(*Sexual Outsiders: Understanding BDSM Sexualities and Communities* by David M. Ortmann and Richard A. Sprott. 173 pp. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc.) □

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Marriage and Immigration

Claire and Maria have been in love for nearly 20 years. Unable to marry, they established a business that allowed Maria to acquire a nonimmigrant visa and travel from her home in an Asian country to the United States to be with Claire several months throughout each year. Claire also made occasional trips to Maria's home country. Maria regularly traveled to the United States, but each time she arrived the Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Officers of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security detained her, often for hours, asking probing questions about her relationship to Claire. At one point, Maria was coerced into revealing that she and Claire are life partners. Then, several years later, Maria was refused entry to the United States. The CBP officer incorrectly concluded that she was in possession of the wrong type of visa and ordered her removed (deported) from the United States and sent her back to her home country – barred from returning to the United States for five years.

Claire and Maria spent many hours and thousands of dollars to undo the order of removal, and Maria was reissued her non-immigrant visa. The long trips back and forth resumed. However, the financial and emotional toll of the removal order and encounter with CBP took a heavy toll on the business the couple had lovingly worked to create. Eventually the business was brought nearly to collapse.

Then, on June 26, 2013, while Maria was in the United States visiting Claire, the U.S. Supreme Court overturned Article III of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), holding that the federal definition of marriage was unconstitutional.

By many estimates, there are approximately 36,000 same-sex bi-national couples who, prior to the Windsor decision, were prevented from enjoying benefits under

U.S. immigration law in the same way that opposite-sex couples have been able to for decades. With the Supreme Court's decision, the obstacle to enjoying full recognition under federal law fell away.

In what can only be described as remarkable speed by government standards, the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security Janet Napolitano issued the following statement on July 1:

After last week's decision by the Supreme Court holding that Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) is unconstitutional, President Obama directed federal departments to ensure the decision and its implication for federal benefits for same-sex legally married couples are implemented swiftly and smoothly. To that end, effective immediately, I have directed U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to review immigration visa petitions filed on behalf of a same-sex spouse in the same manner as those filed on behalf of an opposite-sex spouse.

Before Maria returned home Claire filed the initial petition with USCIS that will allow Maria to apply for a fiancée visa in her home country. It remains pending, but hopefully USCIS will approve it soon and Maria can then come to the United States to be with Claire permanently.

The Windsor decision will have many impacts in the area of federal government benefits, but in the area of immigration, that impact is has been swift and dramatic, in no small way because of the distances that couples have had to travel to stay together.

In this post-Windsor environment, same-sex couples married in one of the several states, the District of Columbia, or the many countries throughout the world that instituted marriage equality will be able to derive benefits under U.S. immigration laws. For example, a U.S. Citizen or a Lawful Perma-

nent Resident can file the required petition for his or her foreign national spouse. If approved, the foreign national spouse will then be able to apply for permanent residency (green card).

The benefits to same-sex spouses are broader than this example however. Persons coming to the United States with a nonimmigrant visa can have their same-sex spouses apply for a derivative visa status. On August 2, in London, Secretary of State John Kerry announced that the State Department will consider same-sex marriages in the same way that it previously considered opposite-sex marriages for all visa applications, meaning that a person coming as a student or as a temporary worker, can bring his or her spouse.

Most important to same-sex couples seeking to navigate the complex immigration laws has been the consistent declaration by all levels of the federal government that for purposes of seeking immigration benefits, the couple need only show that they were married in a jurisdiction recognizing their marriage – the “place of celebration” rule. There is no further requirement mandating that the couple reside in a place where their marriage would be determined to be lawful. As a result, same-sex couples living in states where marriage equality is not recognized can still earn an immigration benefit so long as he or she is otherwise qualified for the benefit sought.

This is an exciting era in immigration law and same-sex married couples looking to benefit from our laws should feel confident that their marriage enjoys full recognition by our government. □

Brian Aust has been practicing immigration law since 2000. Information about him and his firm can be found at www.austschmiechen.com

BIGGAYNEWS.COM: YOUR GLBT WORLD NEWS!

**BIGGAYNEWS FROM MINNESOTA:****Minnesota Mayor Bids For Illinois Gay Couples' Weddings**

ABC News reports that Minneapolis Mayor R.T. Rybak was making a pitch Thursday to gay and lesbian couples in Chicago that they should come to his city to say their vows — and spend their money on weddings — rather than wait for Illinois to join Minnesota in legalizing same-sex marriages. The mayor, speaking at a news conference in a predominantly gay neighborhood, said that he hopes gay Chicagoans will choose to drive six hours to Minneapolis to get married instead of flying to one of the coasts for their nuptials. Rybak is calling his push “Marry Me In Minnesota” and is hoping to bring tourism dollars into the state by making it appealing to GLBT couples in neighboring states which do not currently recognize same-sex marriage.

BIGGAYNEWS FROM UTAH:**Mormon-Focused Publisher Under Fire For Dropping Gay Author**

Reuters reports that a Utah book publisher has drawn criticism for shelving a young-adult novel after its co-author demanded his gay partner be mentioned in a flap-jacket biography. Michael Jensen said that he was told by the company that any mention of his partner on the author page would risk upsetting bookstores which would be carrying the novel, and that it should be removed to make it more acceptable to the Mormon market. The novel itself does not contain any mention or reference to homosexuality.

BIGGAYNEWS FROM MINNESOTA:**Minnesota Sees Rush To Gay Marriage**

The *Star Tribune* reports that same-sex couples received nearly 1 in 3 marriage licenses issued in Minnesota since they were allowed to wed. The Associated Press found in a statewide survey of the first month's impact of the new gay marriage law. While the majority of licenses to same-sex couples were issued within the Twin Cities metro area, applications were received in nearly every corner of the state. Senator Scott Dibble (Democrat, Minneapolis) said that he felt the volume of same-sex marriage applications reflected the pent-up demand of many years of the GLBT community feeling that their relationships were considered substandard in the eyes of the state.

1-BIGGAYNEWS FROM THE UNITED STATES:**Christians For Gay Marriage Launch “Not All Like That” Campaign**

Time reports that they call themselves the NALT Christians, and Wednesday morning they quietly launched a video campaign with a controversial message: there is nothing anti-Biblical or inherently sinful about being gay,

lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. The movement came about through the efforts of Wayne Besen and Even Hurst of the Truth Wins Out organization, and John Shore, a California pastor with a group known as the Progressive Christian Alliance. Those involved with the campaign are striving to let both the GLBT community and its allies, especially young people, know that not all Christians are against them or see them as sinful. As Besen states: “Young people are very uncomfortable when they see these finger-wagging evangelicals who don't seem to have much in common with the Jesus they believe in.”

2-BIGGAYNEWS FROM AUSTRALIA:**Australian Prime Minister Defends Gay Marriage**

ABC News reports that Prime Minister Kevin Rudd has mounted a spirited defense of same-sex marriage only days out from Australian elections. Upon being questioned about the Bible regarding marriage as only between a man and a woman, Rudd responded that human and social conditions change and evolve, and that the Bible also condoned slavery as well. Australian Marriage Equality national director Rodney Croome said of Rudd's support: “It is unprecedented in Australian history for a prime minister to give such a strong defense of equality for gay people, and it was made all the more compelling because it was from a Christian perspective.”

BIGGAYNEWS FROM AUSTRALIA:**Ricky Martin – “I Would Bully People Who I Knew Were Gay”**

The *Huffington Post* reports that Ricky Martin might be an openly gay celebrity now, but years ago he bullied others just like him while growing up in Puerto Rico. Martin, who came out in 2010, said that his upbringing caused him to be ashamed of his homosexuality, which led to his taking out his anger and low self-esteem on others who he saw as being the sort of people he didn't want to be. The singer stated: “I look back now and realize I would bully people who I knew were gay. I internalized homophobia. To realize that was confronting to me. I wanted to get away from that.”

3-BIGGAYNEWS FROM MEXICO:**Mexican Lawmaker Asks to Bar Gay Unions In Public**

ABC News reports that a state legislator has caused a stir by asking authorities to bar gay weddings from public spaces, arguing it confuses children in a state that just approved same-sex civil unions. Rafael Mendoza, a state lawmaker from Colima, reported that he had mothers coming to him with complaints about their children witnessing a wedding ceremony between two men in the main plaza of the city. Colima recognizes same-sex civil unions, but restricts marriage to being between a man and a woman only. Mendoza refused to retract his comments, even though his own party supports gay marriage in Mexico.

4-BIGGAYNEWS FROM RUSSIA:**Children Of Gay Parents In Russia Hide Ties Under New Law**

Bloomberg reports that working in a St. Petersburg restaurant after high school, Kristina Kochetkova was prepared for long hours and rude customers, but she didn't expect her boss to goad her in front of her co-workers for having two mothers. In light of Russia's new laws, Kochetkova's parents are technically criminals, which means that she will not be talking about them when she starts college for fear of reprisal against her or, more importantly, her parents. More and more same-sex parents are having to caution their children before they start school about mentioning anything about their home life to teachers or other students. □

Guess Who's Coming to Dinner? Twin Cities HRC Hosts Annual Gala with Special Guest Lea Thompson

The Twin Cities Human Rights Campaign is preparing for its annual fundraising dinner, in a year when we have so much to celebrate, with so much work left to do. **DyShaun Muhammad**, member of the HRC National Board of Governors and Co-Chair for the Twin Cities HRC Steering Committee, puts this event into the context of the HRC's big picture, both here in Minnesota and across the United States.

Each year the Twin Cities HRC holds a Gala Dinner. What happens at this event and what are you looking forward to this year?

Our goal is to have the annual HRC Dinner be the keystone local event in support of LGBT equality. We aim for it to be an evening of fun, inspiration, education and mobilization. We expect over 1000 attendees of all stripes, dressed in their finest, for a reception, silent auction, dinner program and a chic after-party – all in support of equal rights. Our goal is to host a fundraiser that people eagerly anticipate and want to support. The dinner has become a great tradition for the community.

We are thrilled to have Lea Thompson as our special guest for this year's dinner. While most people remember her roles in the "Back to the Future" trilogy, she started her career doing ballet and theater here in Minneapolis. She has had an impressive career in film, TV and on stage, but we are most impressed by her long-standing support for LGBT equality. We are looking forward to having her join our celebration and hear about her commitment as an "Ally for Equality."

What are the primary objectives of the HRC in the Twin Cities?

HRC's mission is to end discrimination against LGBT citizens and realize a nation that achieves fundamental fairness and equality for all. Over the last year, we provided significant support to the Minnesotans United "Vote No" and subsequent marriage equality efforts with full-time staff, over a million dollars in funding, as well as continuous activation of our members to help secure those wins. While marriage has garnered tons of attention, we've been taking action on several areas many may not have heard about:

To activate our supporters and build more awareness around transgender issues, we organized a special reading of the memoir, "Becoming Ellen" with Ellen Krug, a local transgender author earlier this summer.

To build community with new potential allies, we've been busy piloting our "Ya Es Hora" program where we partner with local immigrant service organizations to conduct free citizenship workshops.

And of course, to help generate the funds to continue to spread equality around the nation, we have events like the dinner, our annual spring bowling tournament and membership

drives at LGBT Pride festivals all over the state that allow anyone to contribute to the cause in a way that is meaningful to them.

What is the "State of the HRC" beyond Minnesota?

We are energized by the great work we have been able to do in places like Minnesota and we're working hard to translate that energy into even tougher struggles ahead that haven't gone away with [Section 3 of] DOMA.

Chad Griffin, HRC's President, talks a lot about the part of LGBT America we sometimes forget in places like the Twin Cities. Places like where I grew up, North Alabama, or rural South Dakota, Nebraska and Georgia where a young transgender girl or an aging gay couple has to fight continuously for basic dignities we take for granted. In most of the country, you can still be fired for being trans, gay or bi. Chad has been touring some of the "reddest" states in the nation to bring attention to that part of our community. You will see HRC redouble our efforts for meaningful change where it is so desperately needed.

In DC, we're focused on getting bipartisan support behind the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (ENDA). Hundreds of our members will be on Capitol Hill lobbying Congress on ENDA as well as immigration, health care, HIV treatment and school safety issues in the coming months.

Locally, we're working on bringing a program to the Twin Cities to educate health care providers on the Healthcare Equality Index, a program that helps providers become more LGBT-friendly. Our local volunteers will also be heavily involved in helping to support our allies and supporters in Congress and in the state legislature as they face anti-LGBT opponents in 2014. We have to make sure they know that we have their backs and ensure we don't lose what we've fought so hard to achieve.

Marriage in Minnesota isn't the end of the story – It's the beginning of a new chapter in a long struggle started by numerous courageous folks from prior generations. We have a lot of work to do and HRC is in a strong position to be part of that effort.

Minnesotans have had a fundraising-heavy two years—what would you say to encourage your fellow human-rights-minded people to stay engaged and attend the dinner?

The fight for equality goes well beyond our backyard. Back in May, I went to the HRC dinner in Atlanta. In Georgia, they are a long way from achieving what we have secured to date here in Minnesota on marriage and other basic rights. Nevertheless, the energy in that room and the hope brought about due to what we were about to accomplish here was elec-



Lea Thompson, "Ally for Equality." Photo courtesy of HRC

tric and provided more than enough reason for the people to dig deep in support of equality.

Minnesotans have the vision to see the bigger picture. We have to keep doing this – raising money, raising awareness, activating new people – until no part of this nation suffers any form of discrimination. Besides, Corey Smith and Arouna Phommassouvanh (this year's dinner co-chairs) are fabulous hosts and it's one of the best parties in the cities every year. A room full of smart, good looking, dressed-up people – why would you want to miss out? ■

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Six Questions With Mayoral Candidate MARK ANDREW



Mark Andrew. Photo courtesy of Mark Andrew for Minneapolis Mayor

This series of questions and answers with some of the Minneapolis mayoral candidates is to give the GLBT community a glimpse of five of the candidates this year. *Lavender* selected five diverse candidates from the field of almost three dozen to give readers a taste of their ideas and philosophies. Six questions have been formulated to give these candidates a place to express their leadership styles and approaches to governance. These questions are on general topics because the GLBT community is as interested in safe communities, accountable government, and budget priorities as the rest of the greater Minneapolis community. Since Minneapolis is the largest city in the state and its downtown has many amenities used by the rest of the state, this mayor's race affects people living outside its borders. Hopefully, this series will interest and inform your choice for mayor and stimulate discussions.

Mayor Rybak really pushed for making Minneapolis a more liveable city advocating for more public art, mass transit and community programs. How would your approach as mayor differ and what would be the theme for your term?

Mayor Rybak has done a tremendous job, and as mayor I will continue his legacy of building Minneapolis into a world-class city. Fundamentally my approach to the office of mayor will be energetic and collaborative. I want to be the mayor of Minneapolis, not the mayor of City Hall. I will focus directly on the big issues like making Minneapolis the greenest city in America, caring for every one of our children by working to eliminate our opportunity gaps, and creating an environment where workers and businesses can thrive. Mayor Rybak has done great work in these areas and I will do even more.

The theme of my term will be threefold; opportunity, growth, and innovation. I am running because this city has been a place of tremendous opportunity for me—I want everyone in Minneapolis to have the same opportunities I did. I also want to make sure our city is growing and thriving; I will focus on adding 100,000

people to Minneapolis to increase our property tax base and make our city more livable.

Safe neighborhoods are important to all citizens but the GLBT community is especially sensitive on this issue. How would you work with police, community groups, and the city council towards making the city safer?

Safety matters. Everyone should not only be safe but also feel safe in our city. The key to safety is partnerships. Fundamentally, when Minneapolis has tackled a safety concern, when we as a city have been successful, it has been by working together. When I talk to Minneapolis residents, residents tell me collaboration works.

There are also legislative opportunities. I was deeply disappointed the anti-bullying bill was killed in the last legislative session, and as mayor I will be an active proponent of anti-bullying legislation next session.

It is easy to talk about making Minneapolis safer. It is harder to make it happen. I will form the partnerships and work with our community to make it happen.

Block E hasn't been a great success. What would you support doing with the site to make Hennepin Avenue a better venue?

I had concerns about Block E since its inception and I think it's something that will take creative solutions. It's simply too removed from the downtown population at the moment. One of the focuses of my campaign is growing the population of Minneapolis by 100,000 people and many of those residents will move downtown; the needs of our growing population will largely dictate how that space is utilized. It may simply be that we need to reimagine the space.

Mayor Rybak was an advocate for public spending on the Vikings' stadium. If the Timberwolves, for example, began demanding a new arena, how would you deal with that situation?

Public spending is in itself not a bad thing as long as the city is investing the money wisely, the public is consulted, and we are

not subsidizing corporate profits. I can see circumstances where the city has a role investing in public/private partnerships that substantially benefit the city of Minneapolis, but if the city does not get a significant return on our investment, I will vigorously oppose any such efforts. The devil is always in the details with public investments like these, but as mayor I will be vigilant in guarding public dollars to ensure they are being spent wisely.

The GLBT community members are taxpayers and as such we care about accountability for the city's budget. How would you make sure we aren't wasting money on duplicate programs or unproductive initiatives?

I think the issue of transparency and accountability is a huge concern in Minneapolis. US PIRG graded the city's transparency as a D-; it's totally unacceptable that residents don't have easy access to basic documentation about how the city's money is spent. As mayor I will work to encourage checkbook-level transparency so Minneapolis residents can be vigilant in keeping the city accountable.

The issue of duplication and lack of efficiency is an important one, and I think I can bring in a fresh perspective that will make it easier to identify and eliminate wasteful spending.

What direction do you think Minneapolis should take concerning energy use and affordability for residents and businesses?

One of the centerpieces of my campaign is making Minneapolis the greenest city in North America, and renewables play a big role. I'm the only candidate who has proposed a plan to get more renewable energy in Minneapolis. My NextStep proposal will put rooftop solar panels on municipal buildings across Minneapolis, reducing our reliance on dirty energy.

This isn't campaign rhetoric for me—this is my record. I created our recycling program that we use today and as a private citizen was successful in making sure when Target Field was built that it would be the greenest ballpark in the world. ■

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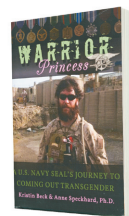
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WARRIOR PRINCESS: A US NAVY SEAL'S JOURNEY TO COMING OUT TRANSGENDER
Kristen Beck & Anne Speckhard, PhD
Advances Press
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Among all the indicators for a potential transgender woman, least likely might be a twenty-year history as a decorated Navy SEAL. Authors Beck and professor of psychiatry Speckhard met during a study of resiliency to combat stress, which led to the two collaborating on the chronicling of Beck's life as—as the cliché accurately nails it—a woman trapped in a male's body. Transgender persons, however tall, short, powerful or frail they may be, know with a certainty that they are born into the wrong gender. This is the value of Beck's story, that no one can discount her earlier life: Beck, now 46 and a Pentagon consultant, is still giving to her country, and is finally living the life she was meant to live.



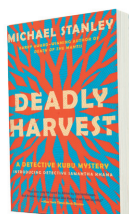
FAR FROM THE TREE: PARENTS, CHILDREN AND THE SEARCH FOR IDENTITY
Andrew Solomon
Scribner
\$37.50

Far from the Tree reads like a gripping novel into which ten years of research and multiple interviews with 300 families have been distilled to produce Solomon's amazingly literate and frequently moving text. His subjects are exceptional children with specific "horizontal identities," created from what Solomon calls "recessive genes, random mutations, prenatal influences or values and preferences that a child does not share with his progenitors." Ten chapters—Deaf, Dwarfs, Down syndrome, Autism, Schizophrenia, Disability, Prodigies, Rape, Crime, Transgender—are bound within "Son," and "Father" which discuss Solomon's own horizontal identity and new life as a gay father. Observing one couple with their profoundly disabled child, Solomon writes, "is to witness a shimmering humanity." A book that will leave an indelible impression on the reader.



TAKEN BY THE WIND
Ellen Hart
Minotaur Books
\$25.99

In Hart's 21st Jane Lawless mystery, Jane's friends, partners Eric Lindstrom and Andrew Waltz, have broken up, causing great distress to their twelve year-old son, Jack. Jack is close to his cousin Gabriel and as the book opens, the two had spent the night outside in their tent playing zombie hunters. But when Gabriel's mother comes to fetch him in the morning, both boys have disappeared. As time passes, annoyance turns to fear. Eric and Andrew call Jane in to start the search—she'd found the boy once before, just hours into an earlier flight. She finds disturbing evidence that indicates something more ominous has happened to the boys—and then a ransom note arrives. Time is running out. A tight, high level read. As always.



DEADLY HARVEST
Michael Stanley
Bourbon Street Books
\$14.99

Botswana Detective David "Kubu" Bengu is working with a new detective in this fourth novel by team Michael Stanley. Samantha Khama is a woman, the department's first, her zeal professional and personal. Young girls are disappearing, feared killed for body parts to be used in muti, a black magic practiced to dread effect by witch doctors. Khama knew an earlier victim and is incensed by the authorities' seeming lack of interest. The plot is made more intense by the authors' use of real cases—one in particular never solved—and their intimate knowledge of Botswana and the Batswana. A father deranged by grief, shady politics, and a rogue undertaker, create a scary, satisfying read. If you haven't already, pick up Kubu's first case, *A Carrion Death*. □

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To describe this incredible kitchen addition is an impossible task. The space is both light and dark. Subtle and rich. Graceful and bold. It curves and flows while remaining structured and grounded. It is historic and contemporary in the same instant. Walnut cabinets with Alder inlay capped in layers of soapstone and three different granites. Floating curved shelves behind hand-blown Italian glass lights. Passing by this German tudor home in Linden Hills, you would never spot the addition or guess at the magic contained within. You don't want to miss this experience!



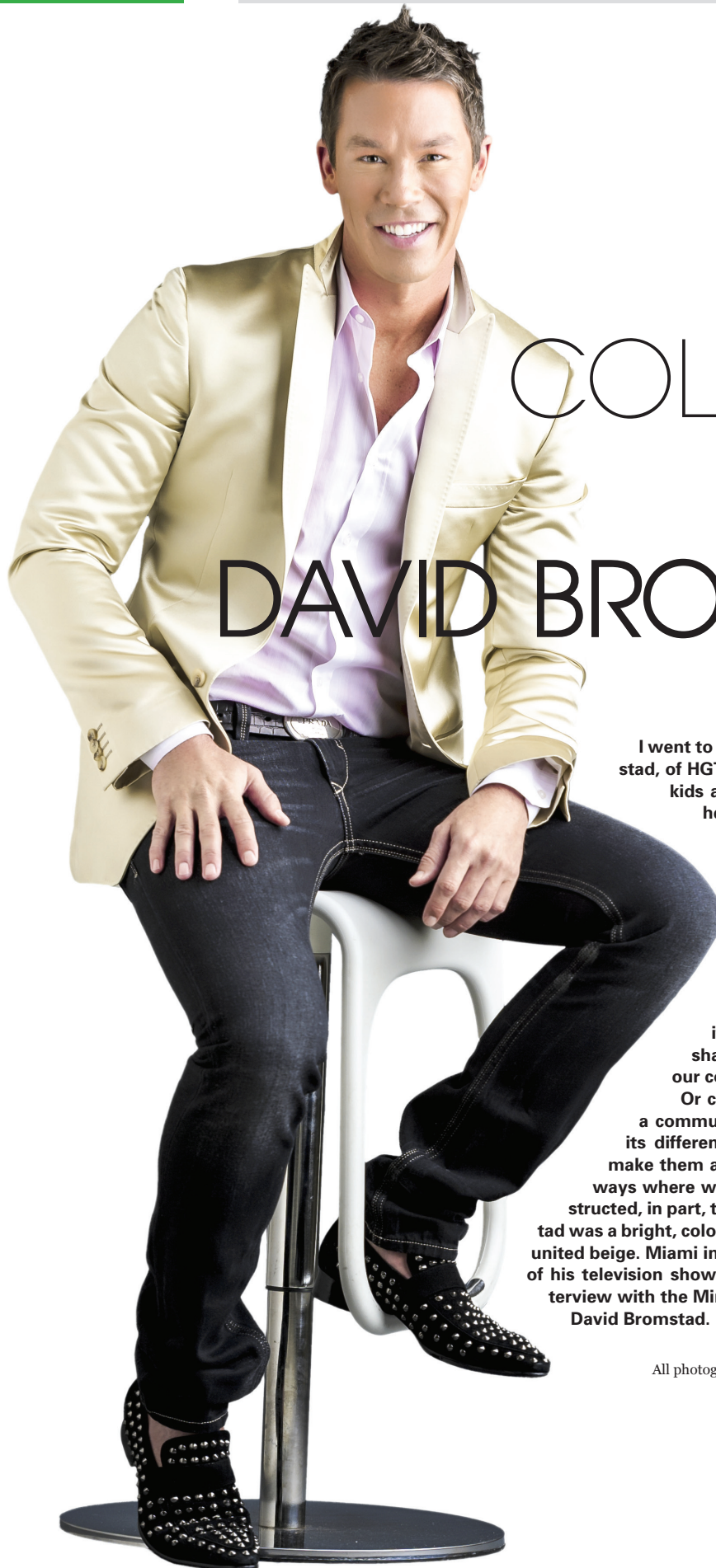
18920 PARK AVE | DEEPHAVEN

Almost a decade in the making, this whole house remodel features three remodeling projects in one! An addition over the garage gave the home serious curb appeal and an incredible Master Suite. An expansive lofted screen porch with gorgeous exposed timber trusses broke the barrier between inside and outdoor living. The kitchen, front entry, staircase, and powder room went through a massive remodel that transformed a small dark kitchen/living room into a light filled, spacious, luxurious experience. Walking through this masterpiece is worth the drive!

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COLORING WITH DAVID BROMSTAD

BY ANDY LIEN

I went to the same rural school as David Bromstad, of HGTV fame. You know how the younger kids always know who the older kids are; he was no exception. I remember him, though he left for the suburbs after 8th grade. His talented family had an impact on our small communities and consolidated school district. Our towns are more conservative than not; our people tend toward the monochromatic in attitudes, behavior, expression, and pallor. Or, that's how it seemed, then. His trademark smile, shared by the sisters that I knew, made our communities brighter.

Or course, no matter how homogeneous a community might appear, we know it's got its differences within. There are positives. We make them and we find them. A hometown is always where we each began. It's where we are constructed, in part, to be who we are today. David Bromstad was a bright, colorful force in what presented itself as a united beige. Miami in Minnesota. A "Color Splash," as one of his television shows was so aptly named. Here's an interview with the Minnesota-Boy-Gone-Big, *HGTV STAR's* David Bromstad.

All photography provided by David Bromstad.

There's quite a nice number of out and proud Dassel-Cokato expatriates. You're probably the most famous of the lot. How do you like them apples? How long were you in D-C school district?

I love them apples. Them apples are delicious! I went to D-C for K-8 grades and moved to Plymouth, Minnesota, and graduated from Wayzata Senior High School. I was the only one from my family, including my mom and dad, NOT to graduate from D-C.

In your own words, you were "After School Special" bullied. Would you care to expand on that? What happened and how did you get through it?

I was constantly harassed for, really, nothing. I was a new kid that entered into an environment that was so foreign from the familiar halls of D-C. I really didn't know who I was after I left Cokato. It turns out I was a very shy person. The girls loved me and the guys hated me for it. I was awkward and had a hint of gayness which was then elevated by the guys. Going to school was torture for me and I dreaded going to school for fear of being tormented everyday. I was always the center of every joke and always laughed at. "Faggot" became a term that I never adjusted to on a daily basis and to this day hate the word. I don't know if there is any way to let you know how I got through it. I just did. I woke up, I dressed myself and I just had to go through it. My strength came from my church group. If it weren't for my relationships with my buddies from the Wednesday night youth gathering, it would have been a much harder road. The best part of being a part of that group is that no one from my school attended my church. It was a massive relief knowing this.

Do you have advice for any of the unicorns out in Dassel-Cokato and other rural schools today?

I do. Hold strong; surround yourself with people who want to be your friend and fight back. When I say fight back I don't mean with fists or words, but mentally. If you put your mind to something, you can do anything. Just remember: these bullies are insecure butt-heads that are taking out their insecurities on someone who they think is less than themselves. Talk to your teachers and counselors. It gets better and there is help out there if you just reach out. Many kids are so scared to reach out because they haven't accepted their sexu-

ality, especially at a young age. Find local organizations and never, ever let someone bring you down. You have the inner strength to fight and rise above. So my advice is fight—and fight like hell.

You came out at age 22. How do you think things would have been different for your coming out experience in 2013?

Times have definitely changed since I came out. People are becoming more accepting and sensitive to my community, which is great. I do believe it's still more difficult to come out in communities with less diversity, like in rural areas. People are close-minded and unfortunately, kids are still locked inside their own closet for fear of being bullied and made fun of. The winds are changing, but we need to fight to ensure they continue to change—and quickly.

And now you live in Miami. Can you tell us more about your life?

I love my life. Miami is my home and I enjoy every minute of it. The city is so colorful and full of people from all ethnic backgrounds. I'm proud to live in a city that is so accepting. I am always busy, so one of my favorite things to do with my partner is just relax on the beach or sit on the couch with my dogs and my partner and just chill out. It's my peace and I am very blessed in life.

Do you come back to Minnesota often? What do you like to do in Minneapolis/St. Paul?

I do come back at least once or twice a year. Family time is so important and when I go home for the holidays, or any celebration, I do nothing but relax and take in the gorgeous crisp air. I always stay at my sister's house on Prior Lake. I just wake up and take in the beautiful scenery and enjoy every minute with my family.

Are you taking interior design clients? Would our readers be able to hire you for their homes and spaces?

Absolutely. This is a new venture in the last year and I am currently working on several personal interior design projects as we speak. It's really challenging to do private work, but I am enjoying it. For more information on my design service, you can check out my website that will lead readers to the appropriate section: www.bromstad.com.



Now HGTV Design Star has become HGTV Star and you're the host, mentor, and original Design Star. What do you find rewarding about this role?

It's such an honor to be hosting the show that started my career. To mentor and host these talented designers on their journeys is really exciting for me; it's like looking in a mirror. I know the stress they are going through and it's really interesting to see it from a different perspective. I'm so proud that I can be there to help them through this intense and overwhelming process of what is a reality competition show. I've been there and done that and I think the designers really appreciate that my perspective is right on point with their own.

In addition to your work with HGTV, you also have artwork for sale—Fine Art by Bromstad on Penny Lane. What role has art played in your interior design and how do you incorporate your art into clients' surroundings? How do you hope that the general public might incorporate your art into their spaces?

Yes, I have partnered with a wonderful company: Penny Lane Publishing. My art is available on their site (www.pennylanepublishing.com) and a link to the art is also on my website. Art is a huge role in my design for clients. It's always been something I leave my clients with to add a personal touch to their space. I always wait to the end of my projects before creating a personal piece for them. I like to find out personal things about my clients and what they like and dislike

in life. After the space is complete, then I can create something for them inspired by what I know about them and their families. My art can be put in any type of décor from contemporary to traditional. My art is always fun and colorful and it's a great addition to any space.

Color seems to be your niche—would you agree? How does your relationship with color set you apart from other designers?

Yes, color definitely is my niche. Color is huge in my life, always has been, and forever will be! In fact, I have given many presentations on color and the meaning of each color and what roles color has in each of our lives. I think, as a designer, people know that I am not afraid to use color, but most people are so frightened by color that they shy away from it completely. Using bright, vibrant color and utilizing it in a way that is not only pleasing to the eye and soul, but is livable. Color is so powerful and many people are afraid of it until they realize it can be used as an accent to liven up any space in their home. Color is my entire world.

Case Studies in Color

For all of my spaces, I usually start with a fresh palette unless the owners have a unique piece that will add something special or unique to my design. I love to take an old piece of furniture and restore it to fit the new design. The three examples below consist of everything new. I didn't use any of their existing pieces because the space didn't call for it and my clients were eager to start fresh.

Color Case Study 1

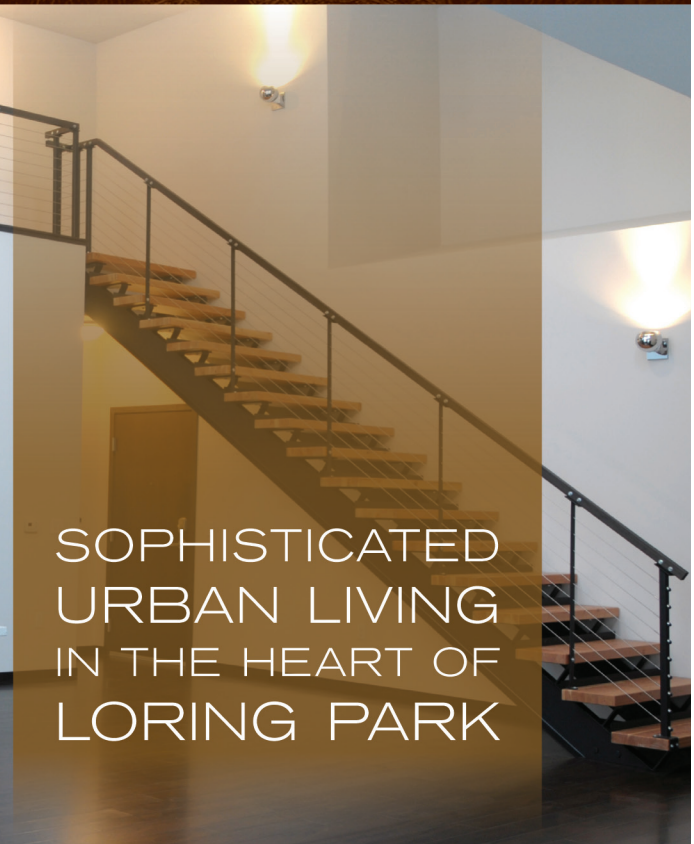


This room is still one of my all-time favorites. Turquoise was the color of the year when I designed this room. It was a condo on Key Biscayne that was really large. The design consisted of the living and dining rooms and hallways of the condo. My favorite piece in the room was the custom oversized tufted ottoman you see in the front of the picture. The use of turquoise with touches of brown and neutral walls really gave this space an incredible feel. Notice how the turquoise is carried throughout the space bringing the room and color together beautifully. Another focal point is the wall mural in the backdrop. It really gives the room a unique touch and adds visual interest and depth to the space. Interestingly enough, shortly after putting this mural up, I partnered with another wonderful company: www.muralsyourway.com. I thought, how fabulous would it be to have my art blown up and made into a wall mural. So now, all of my art can be purchased either as a canvas, or made into a gorgeous wall mural in any size. How fun!



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FALL HOME & GARDEN

I had so much fun designing this dining room for the client. They were so not afraid of color, as you can see. She wanted color and Bromstad delivered. The custom yellow, oversized, dramatic dining bench could easily fit 20 people in the back. White walls really bring out the color in the room and they all pop. The use of yellow, pink, orange, and turquoise shows you that you can combine many different colors in a space and it works. The client just so happened to have French Bulldogs, just like me. So I created these custom pieces for her to add a personal touch.

Color Case Study 2



Color Case Study 3

I loved designing this traditional space. So many of my clients in Miami request a contemporary design, so I was thrilled when I was asked to design this traditional space. The neutral walls are custom designed with tufted fabric bringing an elegant, soft touch to the space. The use of red, which I adore, brings in a rich feel to the room that complements the neutral tones on the walls. This house had a very large living area and, because of the size, we had to ensure the room was comfortable and livable. I created several different seating areas to fill the room because the client requested a room to sit and entertain in. My custom canvas above the fireplace is a focal point in the room as an example of how a piece that appears contemporary at first glance can be incorporated into a traditional setting. □

Learn more about color, David, and his projects on these social networks:

Pinterest: www.pinterest.com/davidbromstad

Instagram: www.instagram.com/bromco

Facebook: www.facebook.com/DavidBromstadTV

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*Contestants can have a total of 27 entries for our grand prize, 27 entries for our second place prize, and 27 entries for our third place prize. However only one prize will be awarded per household. There will be one entry per household for each individual door prize. Once a contestant has won a prize they are no longer eligible to win any other prizes. Castle holds the rights to deny any individual a prize at their own discretion. All prizes worth \$1000 or more must be redeemed by October 1, 2014. If winning prize is not claimed within 15 days of winning it will be awarded to a new person. Questions, comments and concerns about your winning prize may be directed to Loren Schirber, loren@castlebri.com.

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DESIGN MATTERS

BY LISA ANTENUCCI

All images provided by Shelter Architecture.

"This isn't going to end too well for me is it?"
 "Nope definitely not ending well."
 "Do you still think I'm pretty."

This clever wrap is the punch line for the iPad vs. Surface RT commercial currently running on television. When Apple initially launched the iPad we were awed. It was pretty, sleek, well-designed; it did things that we thought only our computers could do. The iPad, like the microwave, presented us with a device that we didn't even know we needed, and we had to have it. It was true innovation powered by design.

Now, along comes Surface and it has added features that make it more usable at a lower price, making it an appealing competitor to the iPad. This expansion of ideas that make things more user-friendly is the nature of human-centered design. That is what architects and interior designers have always focused on. So, if you pause for one moment and look around at everything you see, you realize that every single inanimate thing is created by someone. And, more importantly, the design of these things makes a difference in your life whether you realize it or not.



Everything required someone to decide how it should happen, where it should happen, and how much it will cost. In that sense, designers make ideas tangible in ways you can touch and experience.

There seems to be a renewed appreciation of great design brought about, in no small way, by businesses realizing that great design boosts their bottom line. Some of today's most inspired

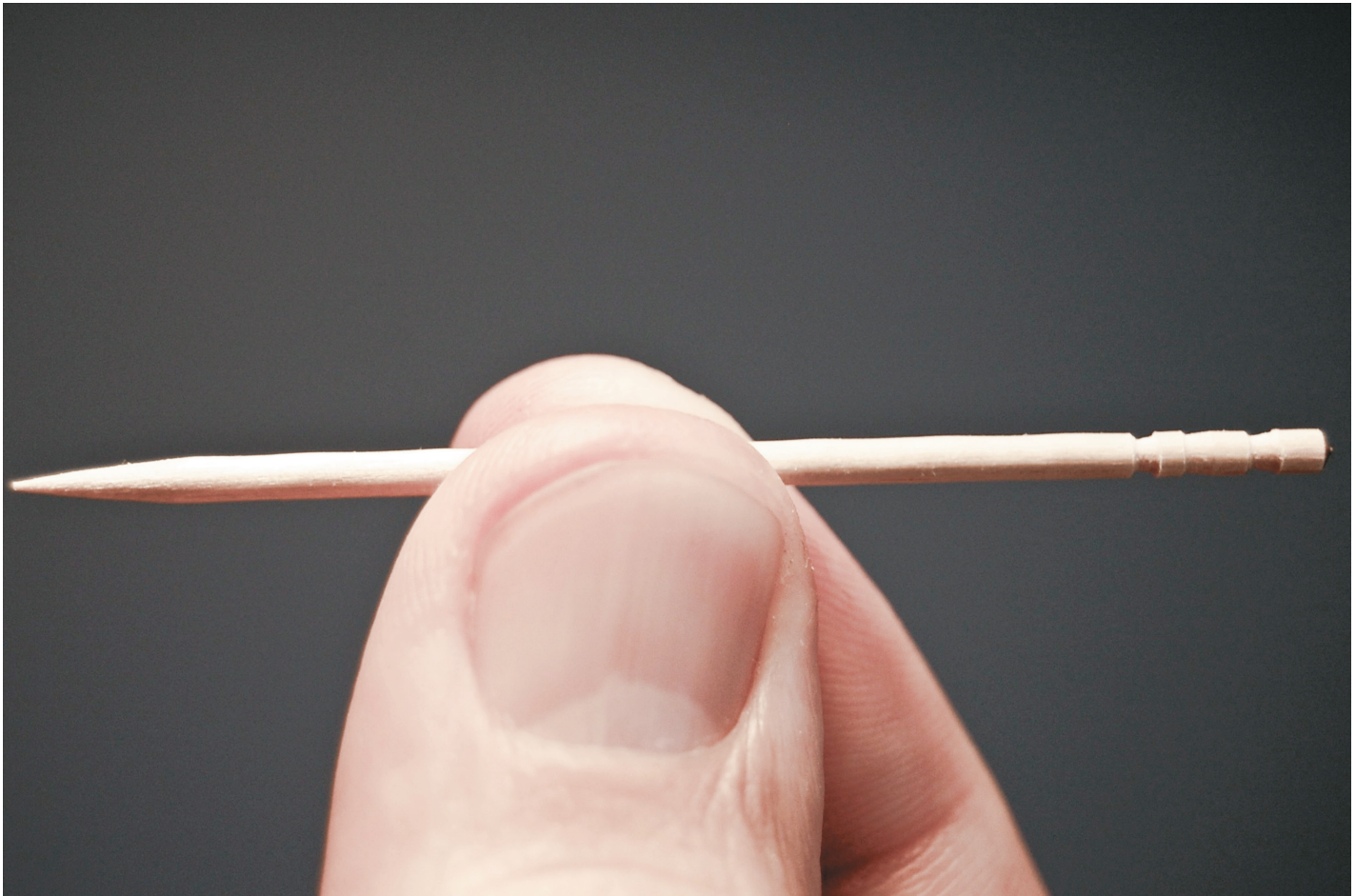
companies are propelled by design: Target, 3M, Apple, Dyson, Nike, and Virgin to name a few.

Aeron Chair designed for Herman Miller in 1989 by Minnesota designer Bill Stump.

Designers are becoming influencers of corporate structure as well as products. Approaching problems from a designer's point of view typically places the users (customers, workers, patrons, etc.) and the overall experience as the guiding force in the creation of innovative solutions. The buzz phrase among designers is "human-centric design"; putting the human experience, on all levels, at the forefront of the design criteria. Great design should consider both the intimate individual human experience and the broader global implications of the things we create.

On the small scale, consider a toothpick. Traditional Japanese toothpicks are pointed on only one end. The other end has grooves. The grooves are designed to allow the end to be broken off, which indicates that the toothpick has been used. It also allows for the pointed end to be propped upon the stub to keep it clean. Even toothpicks are designed. And, when designed with intention, the beauty of the object is expressed.





An unused Japanese toothpick.

On the global scale, the fact is that the things we design usually take resources. They also have a life cycle. It is becoming more and more imperative that designers consider the full ramifications of their work and strive to develop methods of total reuse and recycling of the resources we use.

Designers can't prevent people from doing what they want to with products they own, but that does not excuse them from ignoring the larger system. Often, in our enthusiasm for solving the problem in front of us, we fail to see the problems that we create. Designers...are in a position to make important decisions about what resources society uses and where they end up."

-Tim Brown, Change by Design

Design is a process; an architect would not simply sit down and, in one fell swoop, draw a floor plan. There are progressive steps that a design team takes to arrive at the final product. Every designer has their particular approach but the basic outline of the design process is fairly universal and looks a lot like this:

DISCOVERY

This is where designers look, listen, and imagine. There is a necessity to see what is the actual situation and, at the same time, try to see latent potential. Where are the opportunities? How can this be better used? What if we (fill in the blank)? How does it work? The questions trigger the imagination to begin to see things in a new way. This is an exciting part of the process.

DEFINITION

The next step involves not only looking at all of the collected information from the Discovery phase but also a refinement of the objective. One method is to phrase a question as a "How might we..." statement. It is meant to open up possibilities while helping get the scope of the question to the most potent scale. "How might we create world peace?" may be too large in scope while "How might we find the best height to place a light switch?" is probably a bit limiting. You can also think of this phase as defining the critical elements that must be met in order to define success. There are usually a multitude of factors that a client brings to the designer for consideration. We use these factors to define the question so that it encompasses the entire aspect of the product/space/object to be designed. It becomes the criteria of success used to measure the progress of the design process.



Continued on page 44 ➡

DEVELOPMENT

A well-defined question frees the design team up to test every possible iteration they can think of as long as it meets the “criteria for success.” The Development phase is where the process of trial and error is unleashed. The more things that can be ruled out as NOT working for the end goal, the more the good options rise to the surface. This is an iterative process and the more good ideas are worked and reworked, the more refined and successful the final solution will be. During this part of the process, great design teams have good organization, schedule and reach milestones and deadlines to help focus the process, and are not afraid to let go of ideas that are not allowing for the greatest outcome.

DELIVERY

The ultimate goal is to get the design out into the world. In Architecture and Interior Design the delivery phase focuses on the creation of all the design documents (most people understand these as blueprints and specifications/product selections). Think of this as the instruction manual for the work that is to be done to create the space. There are many other components that the designers and architects are involved in during the “making” of the product, from reviewing bids by the contractors, to making adjustments in the field, to a final “to do” list before the homeowner/office team/restaurant/etc. move in to their newly constructed space that is perfectly fit to their needs and desires.



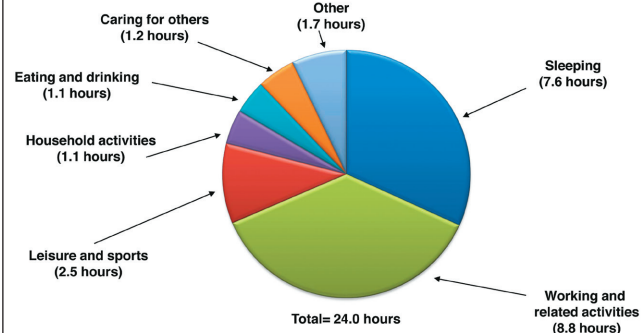
So why should you care about design? Because great design solves problems that people encounter every day. Our environment is directly connected with our wellbeing, and design is about innovating and making things better. One of the skills a designer brings to the table is the training and experience to see many of the things we take for granted. Humans are really amazing at finding inventive work-arounds to situations and objects that get in their way or are not tailored to their needs.

Design directly affects the products you buy and the daily choices you make. A recent study from the University of Missouri (<http://munews.missouri.edu/news-releases/2012/0508-improved-waiting-area-design-increases-customer-comfort-mu-study-finds/>) finds that beautiful environments are a deciding factor when people choose to frequent a business. A study on the effects a waiting area has on diners, conducted by the College of Human Environmental Sciences, found the design of the waiting area directly affected both the restaurant's profitability as well as a willingness to wait and the

enjoyment of the experience by the patrons. This same effect carries over into all aspects of our lives.

The environments of our homes and our work places are where most of us spend over half of our lives.

Time use on an average work day for employed persons ages 25 to 54 with children



NOTE: Data include employed persons on days they worked, ages 25 to 54, who lived in households with children under 18. Data include non-holiday weekdays and are annual averages for 2011. Data include related travel for each activity.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, American Time Use Survey

It only makes sense that those places should be designed to fit our needs and to promote well being. Many aspects of daily life are truly unique to this time period and our environments should be designed to accommodate and improve these unique conditions.

Design for well-being means designing spaces that allow for productivity and relaxation in our homes and in our work places. We need to design spaces that accommodate all abilities and ages. And, when designed well, our homes don't need to be any larger, and ideally could be smaller, than most current homes. Leveraging design to reduce the resources we use both in construction and maintaining our built environment should be a primary focus of any designer. In many ways you can make an analogy between great design and great poetry. Design intends to get to the essence of an idea and manifest it in the simplest and purest form the design team can conjure. Great poetry has similar qualities of distillation and purity; of using less to express more.

Often a simple, well-executed design move can bring about a remarkable transformation. An example of this idea can be seen in a room from the 2012 ASID Showcase House located near Lake of the Isles. The homeowner asked for a room dedicated to his daily practice of meditation. We outlined the requirements and defining factors of the project as:

How might we create a Meditation space that is quiet, with tranquil lighting both day and night?

Some major issues that needed to be addressed were the direct Southern light and the possibility of getting warm during summer months.

The solution centered around a screen wall that was pierced with holes laid out in a Fibonacci pattern (a mathematical sequence found repeatedly in natural forms) to produce a meditative and diffused pattern of light. The choice of this pattern--as well as all the other textures and elements--was a carefully researched selection. A perfect chair, some lighting selections, and a low-profile ceiling fan were added and the room became a gorgeous sanctuary for meditation.

Usually, an environment and the experience in it is specific to the individual. Designers often draw upon broad commonly held,

Continued on page 46 ➔

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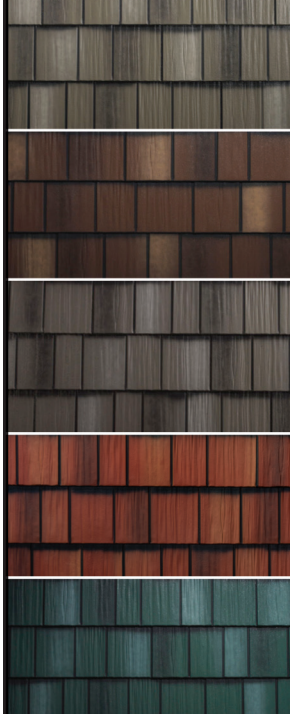
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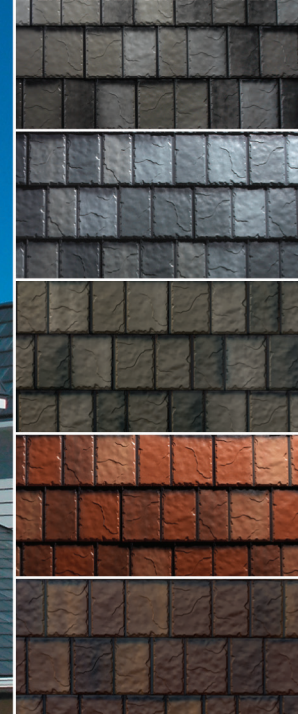
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Fibonacci and Meditation. A room of well-executed design.

culturally understood ideas combined with the specific desires and preferences of the individual user. This is most common in custom design items such as homes and custom furniture pieces. When you partner with an architect or interior designer to build or modify your home (or workplace) you have the opportunity to craft an environment that addresses the things that are most important to you.

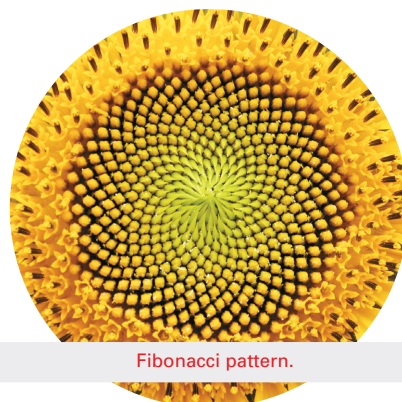
The economics is also a critical item that cannot be left until the end. It must be incorporated into the design process and the criteria for success at the outset. Certain things that drive price can be dealt with in design such as complexity to build, material costs, and any costs associated with operation and maintenance. By placing priorities where they are appropriate for the criteria of the project, we often find the style and aesthetic of the design starts to take shape.

An easy example would be deciding to design a kitchen without any cabinet pulls. Immediately there are some things that are affected. Mostly, what do the doors look like? Are they shaped in a way that the outside edge(s) can be grabbed? Are there shapes cut into the doors to allow you to open them? Are these modifications actually a cost savings? Can they be designed to make the doors more appealing than the common solution of screwing metal hardware onto the doors? How does this choice make it better? These are some of the questions that begin to take shape when you ask, "How might we save money on kitchen cabinet doors?"

Design impacts us throughout every moment of our daily lives. Designers spark ideas on how to innovate and make the world better. They observe the details, ask prying questions, and notice how

we navigate the built environment. It is an exciting and informative way to problem solve that most people find eye-opening the first time they participate on a design team. By allowing yourself to see the possibilities and identify hidden opportunities you can really leverage the power of asking, "How might we...?" 

Lisa Antenucci is an award winning dynamo at Shelter; an innovative, creative, yet accessible design studio specializing in the Architecture and Interior Design of sustainable homes and unique commercial spaces. See her work at www.shelterarchitecture.com



Fibonacci pattern.

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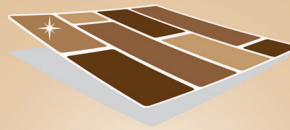
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RAINBOW BUILD: THE GLBTQ COMMUNITY BANDS TOGETHER

BY SHANE LUECK



Habitat for Humanity volunteers finish work on a North Minneapolis home during Rainbow Build Week.



Janice Harmon (left), a future Habitat for Humanity homebuyer, and Kelly Berry (right), an AmeriCorps member who coordinated volunteers, posed for a photo during Rainbow Build Week.

Last month witnessed the first ever Rainbow Build in Minnesota, hosted by the Twin Cities branch of Habitat for Humanity. The build was able to draw attention to issues facing the GLBT community which often go unaddressed.

Rainbow Build lasted from August 26 through August 30 – a week consisting of GLBTQA volunteers building homes to raise awareness around issues for affordable housing in the GLBTQ community. Anne Thul, the volunteer programs manager with Twin Cities Habitat for Humanity (TCHF), reached out to the GLBTQ community for volunteers as an attempt to help strengthen the community through camaraderie in addition to creating new partnerships with organizations (such as US Bank and the University of Minnesota's Office for Equity and Diversity).

TCHF has been working to eliminate poverty housing from the Twin Cities as well as make the need for decent, affordable housing a matter of the public conscience since 1985. Since its inception, more than 900 families have purchased TCHF houses, with hundreds of families applying every year.

Thul says the inspiration for Rainbow Build came from some surprising sources. Both Tucson and Austin have done a rainbow week before, which got people with TCHF talking. As the idea gained momentum, it became clear that the idea should become a reality.

Though the week was originally meant to focus around one site, a

second site was soon established due to high volunteer rates. "A lot of people came specifically because it was a Rainbow Build and were very passionate about that," Thul said. Volunteers came from across the metro-area as individuals or organized groups and worked from 8:30 in the morning until 4:00 in the afternoon each day of the week.

Each day, except Wednesday, community partners were brought in to educate volunteers on affordable housing for the GLBT community. Topics ranged from HIV housing and what services are offered through those programs to GLBT senior housing projects (Minnesota just opened the second one in the country).

Although the week's educational opportunities and volunteerism was meant to raise awareness and camaraderie among the GLBT community, the family ultimately living in the house is a straight couple and their four-year-old twins as well as their six-year-old nephew who is in their care. Located on 31st Avenue North, the Rainbow Build created a home for Sarah Olson and Abdi Mohamed. She is a dental assistant student at Minneapolis Community and Technical College originally from Coon Rapids, and he came to this country from Somalia in 1999 and is currently working as a loan officer for Wells Fargo and part-time at the Children's Museum. As a net-zero energy home, "as long as the home buyers use it the way it's intended, it'll produce zero energy costs for them," Thul says. The second project site, located on Morgan Avenue, does not have a buyer as of yet. ■



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NO PLACE LIKE HOME: REMODELING AND REUSING TREASURES

BY SHANE LUECK

Undeniably, the best part about remodeling is being able to show off the changes made in the home. Admit it: the best feeling in the world for a homeowner comes as a result of the “oohs” and “ahs” followed by the “it looks so great in here” or a similar compliment. These four resources help homeowners experience that coveted euphoria as well as provide people with carefully curated treasures for the new-old spaces.

CASTLE EDUCATIONAL HOME TOUR

With a purpose to educate and inform the public about affordable remodeling projects, Castle Building and Remodeling, Inc. (a professional design and build remodeling company) recently announced a tech-savvy home tour. Each of the 25 homes on the tour will feature an educational topic meant to assist visitors in making smart decisions for their own homes.

In conjunction with this tour, a mobile app has been launched for both iOS and Android platforms which serve as virtual tour guide books, complete with directions from home to home. The smartphone app will also include pictures and project descriptions for each home on the tour. Perhaps the most exciting aspect for the consumer are the contests offered through the app for attendees to win \$10,000 in remodeling and prizes. For those who may not be technologically inclined, Castle Building and Remodeling will be printing 5,000 tour guidebooks – a number drastically reduced compared to similar home tours – in attempts to cut down on paper waste.

The Castle Educational Home Tour will take place September 28-29, with homes open to the public from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm each day. More information can be found at www.castlehometour.com.



PARADE OF HOMES REMODELERS SHOWCASE

Held in the Twin Cities, the Parade of Homes Remodelers Showcase was developed to allow remodelers a chance to show off their work to the public. From the public's perspective, this is a chance to experience first-hand the quality of the remodelers' work. In a sense, it allows people a chance to “shop” both in terms of style as well as meeting the remodeler to see if they are a match.

Presented by the professional members of the Builders Association of the Twin Cities (BATC), the showcase offers 88 projects representing 73 remodeling firms this year, ranging from entire home remodels to basements. All of the homes are free to tour with the exception of three Dream Remodeled Homes which request a \$5 donation to the BATC Foundation to enter.

Visitors can plan to attend 14 events during the tour, including

Castle Educational Home Tour



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design and remodeling seminars, cooking demonstrations, and local wine tastings. Comprehensive guidebooks are available at area Holiday Stations.

The tour runs September 27-29, with homes open Friday from 1:00pm to 7:00pm and Saturday and Sunday 12:00 pm to 6:00 pm. Online tour planning is available at the comprehensive website www.paradeofhomes.org.

ARCHITECTURAL ANTIQUES ANNUAL FALL SALE

Featuring the lowest prices of the year, Architectural Antiques is pleased to announce its annual fall sale. Every item in the store will be sold at a discounted price. "We have had some awesome purchases this year and we want our loyal customers to have access to these unique pieces," says Scott Anderson, the store's owner.

In business for just shy of 40 years, Architectural Antiques has made it a priority to "Integrate Past Environments into Yours" and the fall sale will continue that mission. Customers will be able to take advantage of the storewide discounts showcasing some of the most unique and desirable architectural pieces in the country.

Architectural Antiques



With 28,000 square feet of retail warehouse space, Architectural Antiques is able to offer freshly stocked antiques originally heralding from coast to coast. Anderson says the store specializes in decorative architectural elements, with not only the largest selection in the Minneapolis area, but also in the country. Customers are likely to find vintage light fixtures, original fireplace mantels and doors, decorative hardware, plumbing fixtures, stained glass windows, terra cotta, and ecclesiastical relics.

The sale spans three days: October 4-5, 10:00 am to 5:00 pm and October 6, 12:00 pm to 5:00 pm. Architectural Antiques can be found at 1330 Quincy Street NE, Minneapolis, and online at www.archantiques.com.

THE COTTAGE HOUSE

Serving as a popular occasional market, The Cottage House has just expanded to double the size of its current location. The Cottage House, located at 4304 Chicago Avenue South, has occupied a two-story farmhouse for over seven years. Last year, the business took on a neighboring vacant building and renovated it, significantly increasing its size.

Only open five days each month, both local and out-of-town shoppers frequent the popular home décor destination. The Cottage House boasts a whopping 43,000 fan base on Facebook. Featuring a different theme each month, the store uses the time between sales to transform, from overhauling merchandise to painting floors and walls.

Best known for a shabby-chic style of furniture at low prices, store merchandise is a generous mixture of antiques; redesigned, reinvented, and refreshed home furnishings and décor; and garden, vintage, and salvaged finds. The shop boasts a creative team of vendors, many of whom are professional artists and designers, who create their own space within the shop.

Upcoming sales for The Cottage House run October 9-13 and November 6-10. Additional sales, hours, and details are available online at www.thecottagehouseempls.com. □

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Photos by Randy Stern

CHEVROLET SPARK

What happens when you live in a place where parking is a premium and the streets are semi-maneuverable?

If you happen to live in such a place – parts of Minneapolis and St. Paul come to mind – how do you manage for transportation? You have plenty of options: Public transpor-

tation, car and bike sharing, taxicabs...or pay for off-street parking to accommodate a car that might not fit in most spots

But, if you needed the freedom of a car whenever you want, what solutions do you have available to you?

One choice is the Chevrolet Spark. It is

considered a city car or minicar according to today's vehicular classification standards. It was designed for a global audience where most of the places it traverses lack amenities, such as off-street parking or space to get through the narrowest gaps on any given byway. The lack of space was an en-

try towards creating a car that maximizes its needs onto a small footprint.

For those certain places where such space is limited – the aforementioned parts of Minneapolis and St. Paul, for example – General Motors thought it was a great idea to import the Spark to our continent. It prompted us to consider whether the Spark fits well here in the Upper Midwest. A little Jalapeno hued Spark 2LT arrived and we promptly took it deep into the neighborhoods to find out.

For starters, the Spark's design was not meant to be alluring or elegant. There is a purpose for the high roofline and the tight overhangs. To conquer these urban enclaves, you have to fit in the most miniscule of places. Therefore, the overall look is useful, practical and a subject of much discussion.

For North America, the Spark's overall look was adjusted for taste. The shape remains the same, but the front fascia and the use of larger wheels help in bringing some form of distinction over here. Yet, one will be surprised by how wide the each door opens and how practical the hatch is. Let us not forget the roof rails for even more cargo holds up on top.

Once inside, the driver will find mounds of room behind the wheel. A tall driver can find a place behind the adjustable steering wheel/instrumentation pod. The driver seat is manually adjustable for rake, height and recline, with an adjustable headrest. However, to seat four adults inside the Spark will be somewhat of a challenge, unless they are average or smaller. A family of four – including two small children will also be just fine inside the Spark.

The instrument pod is a design is a more concentrated version of the same on the larger Chevrolet Sonic. In turn, modern motorcycles also influence the instrument pod. You have a speedometer dial with a blue LCD screen to the right for the tachometer, fuel gauge and trip information readouts.

Though the screen may seem a bit cluttered, it is a useful tool for drivers to get the information they need on their journey.

In the center stack is Chevrolet's MyLink screen, with a unique set of graphics and simplified commands. There is a screen for apps that are interfaced with your smartphone. One such app is the BringGo navigation app, which serves as the Spark's GPS and mapping system. You can also stream music via Pandora, Stitcher and TuneIn Radio. I thought it was cool to bring in an old favorite station from Los Angeles and the news from Australia's main public radio network while traversing the streets of Minneapolis. The OnStar buttons are on the headliner near the rearview mirror.

Cargo space is adequate, yet expandable with the rear seats down. You can get warm or cool with the Spark's air conditioning system, but it does take a bit of time to get the air circulating in the car.

Powering the Spark is a 1.25liter in-line four that offers only 84 horsepower and 83-pound-feet of torque. Today, these numbers may seem inadequate, but they do work in the Spark. In the city, you do not need a lot of power to accomplish everything possible. It does well just rolling along in town.

It is where you need to accelerate is the point that the power is not enough. This Spark is connected to a four-speed automatic gearbox, which is fine after first gear. On heavy acceleration, first gear will take longer to shift down and a wall of noise will tell you hard this small engine is working to get there. Manual drivers may opt to go that route with five gears to work with the clutch.

It is worth noting that the four-speed automatic will be superseded by a continuously variable transmission for the 2014 Spark.

One does not expect a sports hatch ride from the Spark. An enthusiast will be disappointed, but not every day drivers. It rides quite well, yet it will react to road imperfec-

tions and noticeable bumps. The Spark leans and rolls in the corners. Yet, its steering action is quick and sharp, truly giving this city car the agility it needs to get into tight spots. Braking is fine under normal conditions, though we found some sideways movement on panic stops – easily recovered through its anti-lock brakes and sharp steering system.

When people ask about the Spark, they would think it would be a car that would achieve very high fuel efficiency. Some even asked if it was electric – though consumers in California and Oregon can now get the Spark EV to plug in and stay off away from gas pumps. However, this gas-fueled Spark only mustered 34.6MPG.

The Spark is the lowest priced vehicle GM sells in North America – starting at \$12,995 for a LS manual model. Our 2013 2LT tester came to \$16,720. Opting for the 2014 model with the new CVT would mean paying another \$490.

When I think of where the Spark really works, I always look at the places where urban dwellers find solace. A run through those parts of Minneapolis confirms this notion.

The result was exactly what we expected. You can park in tight spots, load up on groceries or small furniture and play sober cab before a real one shows up at the bar.

It is not just urbanistas that will enjoy the Spark. As tested, Chevy's city car also plays well in the suburbs. If you work within a few miles of the jobsite, only go to the local shops and do things within a reasonable distance, the Spark can a fun way to live with plenty of space in the garage for snowblowers, lawn mowers, camping and picnic equipment, old furniture, and so forth.

Before you pass judgment on the little Chevrolet Spark, take off your usual hat and see it from the eyes of its intended user. That way, you will understand why GM brought this little number across the Pacific Ocean for us. □



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Panties

"Panties."

There, I wrote it. For some, it's a titillating word. Even scandalous.

Panties.

For others, it evokes a rush of emotion, excitement, embarrassment, or imagination.

Except for most gay men, who couldn't be less interested.

I just don't see what all the fuss is about. Hey, did you clean the cappuccino machine last night?

On the other hand, if you're a straight guy (and I don't expect that many are my readers, but then again, one never knows), "panties" is code for something quite wonderful. All of that Lycra—or if you're rich, silk—in magnificent pink or royal blue or jet black or virginal white, along with exciting lace, is pretty packaging—think gift wrap—for the prize, the goods, the jackpot, whatever you want to call it down there.

Most hetero dudes see panties as a delightful obstacle to navigate before getting to the real business at hand, so to speak. They're a libido-sparking barrier, not an end in themselves. Yet, men *love* thinking of a woman in panties.

How utterly enticing and inviting!

Straight women have a little different take on panties. I know this because sometimes—but not always, mind you—I consider myself straight.

I once read that the most purchased item by American women are panties; they buy like a dozen and a half thongs or bikinis a year.

Which may explain why some lingerie chain stores do so well.

My observations and empirical research (we're talking women's magazines, television shows [*Sex and the City* has wonderful scientific value, you know] and multiple Chardonnays with women aged twenty-two to sixty-two) suggest that straight women love their panties.

And, as some men will attest, many straight women aren't easily separated from them.

Panties are also a woman's big freedom secret. I'm thrilled to report that they can make you feel sexy and desirable when there's nothing—or no one—else to brighten your day.

Why's the quiet, mousy woman over in account processing smiling so smugly today?

A hot pink, black-laced Brazilian cut panty.

Trust me. It's all about the freedom to be your hot and sexy self.

When I haven't been a straight woman, I've been a lesbian.

I've found that many lesbians, in contrast to straight chicks, don't wear panties.

They don't *underwear*.

In other words, it's about a person's mindset.

I've had several girlfriends. Only one actually wore pretty panties, and mostly that was because she wanted to make sure I didn't lose interest.

Another forty-something girlfriend with an absolutely gorgeous body wore only grandpa panties, circa 1910. Bloomers. Enough cotton to sustain a small farm just north of Birmingham, Alabama.

Then there was the girlfriend who was fond of wearing what looked like biker shorts.

Boring undergarments equate to boring sex. That, dear gentle readers, is another proven scientific fact. Because I say so.

As if you've not had enough by this point, let me disclose one more detail.

For most of my male life, I had this thing about panties. I began prancing in front of mirrors wearing my sister's daisy-print underwear when I was eleven years old. By the time I was in law school, I had graduated to high quality big name department store lingerie.

It was my little secret that I kept from the world, not to mention my long-time girlfriend turned wife. Eventually—twelve years into our marriage—I confessed to Lydia that I loved to wear pretty panties. Reluctantly, she gave in and let me trade tighty whities for lacy bikinis. In retrospect, it was nothing more than a holding action on my part; I thought that if I wore something female under my pinstriped suit with Jerry Garcia tie, it'd be enough to keep me from dealing with my *real* gender issue.

I was wrong. Wearing panties was a symptom of something much bigger, like change-your-gender bigger. Lucky for me, I got there.

Panties helped set me free to be me.

I'm not alone. Often, transgender folks start out with underwear cross-dressing. It's safe and discreet and allows you to catch your breath before taking the next step in your gender journey.

As I've often said, much of everything that's important in life is incremental. You start with panties. Two dozen steps later, you're wearing an exquisite Jackie-O knockoff with white pillbox hat and purse.

Freedom.

It's another word for panties. □

Sophia Hantzes

DULUTH-SUPERIOR PRIDE FRUIT FLOAT SEPTEMBER 1, 2013



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The Elephant In The Room

I just read this fun fact about elephants: homosexual elephants have sex year 'round, but heterosexual elephants have sex only a couple times during the year, usually during rainy season. From my recent experience, the same applies to straight humans.

I'm writing this from Seward, Alaska. For the past week, I've been sequestered in a lodge on the Bay of Alaska with a group of straight women. It's been rainy and cold every day. And the ladies are getting restless.

Tonight, someone suggested that instead of pouring ourselves into our rain gear for the umpteenth time and climbing yet another glacier, we stoke the fireplace and "get cozy."

And, then, one of the ladies introduced a bottle of tequila to the scene. Much like Chekov's famous gun—which states that if a gun is introduced in the first act, it will be fired in the second or third act—once tequila is opened, someone will certainly do something stupid before the night is through.

I decided to go to Alaska about a year ago. I made the decision when my mom was dying from a vicious and aggressive cancer. She only lived two months after the diagnosis, but we had a lot of time to talk before she died. I deliberately ignored most of her advice during my life, but after she was issued

her death sentence I suddenly found her to be very wise.

When I look back now, I realize that she totally used her dying wishes to finally get me to do her bidding. Her list of last requests was epic and fairly ridiculous. "Make sure your nieces don't go into the arts. Get your hair cut and colored at least once a month. Promise me that you will never get a goat or a pig."

And then she said something rather profound. "You're a workaholic and you use work to escape life. Use some of your inheritance to go someplace you've never been before. Go to Alaska."

At least I think she said Alaska. She was on heavy meds and often would fall asleep midsentence. Upon reflection, I'm certain I misunderstood her. She was the least outdoorsy person on the planet. She probably said, "Go to Nordstroms," or some other high-end shopping frontier. But, in my grief, I booked an adventure trip to Alaska designed for "professional women."

And that's how I found myself in a rustic outpost with a gaggle of peri-menopausal, career-minded, straight women whose libidos were stirred by the relentless grey and wet weather that is the Alaskan summer.

One of the women, a librarian with a delightfully raucous sensibility, slammed down the tequila bottle on the table like a threat. "We're doing shots and talking about sex," she said.

Normally, I don't do shots. Rather, I sip my tequila from a highball glass, like a lady. But I'm not one to reject a direct challenge from a librarian.

We all got wasted and confessed our most humiliating sexual escapades and fantasies. Of course, I tried to leverage the naughty vibe to suggest that the straight ladies use their drunken courage to sample some foreign kissing with me. But, apparently, even the rainy season doesn't have the power to transform straights into gays.

We all felt a bit sheepish the next morning, but any lingering foolishness drifted away as another damp fog moved over the bay. Somehow, this rag tag group of highly independent women allowed themselves to be vulnerable for one evening.

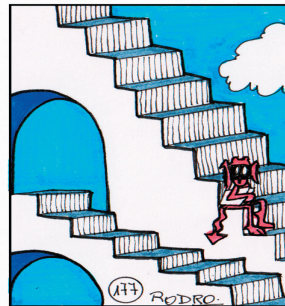
And, maybe that's what my mom really wanted for me. Not to climb a glacier, but to drop my work shield and connect emotionally with other carbon-based life forms. Thanks to the wet Alaskan summer, we were all in the mood to mate. ■

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Yes, I understand we must have *some* sort of emotional counsel. What else motivates one to pride himself on success, or to weep over failure?

Love’s the worst offender. It should be left to fiction, to Jane Austen and her sorority.

And I do enjoy fiction in my spare time. Through books I experience romance from far enough away. I made the mistake once, however, of turning such fiction into a real-life experiment...

It’s 2009. I’m 20 years old. It’s late August.

I’m sitting on my dorm building’s stoop in the early evening, reading *Emma*, waiting for him, nervous. This is one of my first “real” dates with another guy. It is a date, isn’t it?

He drives up in a snot-green Ford Taurus. He’s 6’2” with brown hair and blue eyes; he’s cute to look at, but beautiful to watch—the way he walks, how he so freely moves. Sounds silly, I know.

I am intrigued by his spontaneity, his silliness, his free spirit. He’s unlike my class-

mates; he’s unfazed by competition and success and left unburdened by ambition and responsibility.

“Take a walk with me,” he says.

We were supposed to drive to a party. A walk wasn’t planned.

Ugh.

But off we go.

I’m bad with silence, especially when I’m nervous, so I make “conversation” by laying immediately into one-sided, rapid-fire nonsense. I talk about being an RA, books, school. I talk about this and that and this and that and this and that and that and that and this and this and that, and I know I’m talking too much but I can’t help it and I—

I feel his hand in the small of my back. Everything slows down. He turns me toward him, puts his hands on my hips, and pushes his lips onto mine.

He kisses me. In the middle of campus, on my lips, he *kisses* me.

For the first time I can remember, I need no words. I have no thoughts. I feel, I see, only him. And his deodorant. I smell his awful deodorant. Axe.

So here I stand, kissing an irresponsible, ridiculous, snot-green-car-driving man inside an area of town of questionable safety, for the first time in my life not giving a fuck.

Well, maybe giving a *little* fuck. There is an awkward moment when I don’t know where to put my hands. Do I hold his face? Do I grab his hips? Or do I just lay my arms by my side? And are our noses doing anything weird? Are they suppose to touch? I haven’t really done this before. I want to ensure its success.

We pull away, and I’m still without words.

I have no conversation to awkwardly make. I have nothing to say, and I’m fine with it.

He holds my hand and we walk for a while in silence. I feel like I’m in a romance novel. You know, the grass is so green, the sky that peachy-sunset color, the air so fragrant. Euphoria. Rose-colored glasses. Those, yes, and whatever else romance makes you feel—this is what I feel.

So what do I do? I ruin the moment, of course.

“That... ugh... That was very good,” I say.

“Um...” he says, “Thank you?”

The night ends awkwardly, but in a cute romantic comedy kind of way.

We dated after that. It didn’t last. When I’m passionate about something, I must analyze it. I must know everything about it. And to it I will dedicate all I have. He wasn’t that way. He saw us differently than I did. And he broke my heart.

I am a chemist. I am in the business of science, not silliness. I am in the business of hypotheses, experiments, and results.

My hypothesis now is that love is for the weak and that I will be alone for the rest of my life. The evidence suggests these truths, and I prefer life that way anyhow.

But there *are* always unexpected influences for which we cannot account. There are sometimes unexpected results. There are failed hypotheses.

Maybe this will be one of them.

Okay, fine, *hopefully*.

Akshat S. lives in Wisconsin. □

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